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But, Cards!—Well, it is cards that has brought out the sporting blood in us.

JACK POTS

STORIES OF THE GREAT
AMERICAN GAME

By EUGENE EDWARDS



THE LOOLOO
*can be played
but once a night*

WITH OVER FIFTY ORIGINAL PEN AND INK
ILLUSTRATIONS BY

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JACK POTS.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IS POKER—ITS ORIGIN, AND WHY
WE LIKE IT.

All civilized nations love sport, but Americans surpass all the world in that as in so many other respects. That is because Americans are so little conservative that they readily adopt all games as their own. As in everything else, England is shy of any but the customs that bear the mark of her own breeding, and a game—out or indoor—makes but slow progress in her affections. We have been trying to introduce base ball into the tight little island for twenty years, and although we are told that there are clubs here and there and hear dim rumors that some of the players are crack-a-jacks, we never hear of any of our magnates signing these phenoms, nor do we believe there is in all Great Britain a boy who gets up in the morning and makes a rush for the paper to see the score before his father looks at it.

On the other hand, we have taken up cricket, which is so essentially English that it takes three days to play a match, and we have fairly gone daft over the Scotch game of golf. The Indian game of Lacrosse had quite a run a few years ago, and even now occasionally sees the light on our northern frontier, and we have even brought the game of polo from far away India. If any nation has a game that has in it the least element of attractiveness, let it be brought along and it will certainly be given a respectful hearing.

But, cards!—Well, it is cards that has brought out the sporting blood in us. There are people who will not believe this, and point to base ball. They say “Look at the thousands who attend a game!” All right; look at them. Then consider that the game only lasts for two hours and that a big league city gets only fifty-seven games in an entire season, if every scheduled game is played. And then consider that the thousands of spectators are not taking any actual part in the game; they are not playing. Apart from the boys, hundreds of the spectators couldn’t catch a fly ball with a net, and for every man looking on there are a hundred who are willing to simply read the account of the game in the next morning’s paper.

But cards we have with us always. There are a few men who have never played cards in their lives and for some inscrutable reason are proud of

the fact, and a greater number who used to play when they were boys but have no time for it now, but the man who never in all his life fingered a pack of cards is about as hard to find as the man who never told a lie. Of course this would not have held true thirty or forty years ago, when cards were held up to scorn as the invention of the devil, and all card players were placed but a shade above a forger or pickpocket. We do not hear so much of that wild talk nowadays.

In cards we are almost as radical as in out of door sports. Faro, baccarat, rouge et noir, and one or two others are decidedly foreign, and there are more coming. Euchre is French, and seven-up is our own. That is the country boy's game, and many a hay mow has looked down on an exciting game, when the old man had gone to town. Euchre is the ladies' game because you can play it any which way, and cheat and talk, and no one will get very mad about it. Whist is never going to be popular, no matter how many clubs are formed or how many trophies are played for. There is too much brain work about whist, pretty much as in chess, and the ordinary man does not care to expend more energy than would saw a cord of wood for the sake of persuading himself that he has had an hour's amusement. One reason whist is played as much as it is, is owing to the idea industriously cultivated that the game is "respect-

able." Perhaps this is due to the fact that the Queen of England plays whist, but she also drinks Scotch whiskey, so that would hardly do to take as an indorsement. In English novels the vicars and curates always play whist, so that may be the reason. At any rate the game is eminently "respectable," and a lady never alludes to her last visit to the whist club without a touch of conscious pride. It adds to her social standing, or she thinks it does, which amounts to the same thing.

When you shuffle up all the games, however, there is one that stands out before and beyond all the others, like a lighthouse on the sea coast or a water tank on a prairie, and that is POKER.

This is not a history, but it seems no more than proper that a brief inquiry into the origin of the game should be given place. It is claimed that it is a descendant of the Spanish game of primero, although the proof is not very clear. According to the people who delve into such things, primero was elaborated in France in the seventeenth century into ambigu, in which the straight, the straight flush, three of a kind, and four of a kind were introduced. About this time a game called post and pair, derived from primero, was played in the West of England, and from this came brag, on which Hoyle wrote a treatise in 1751. In the game of brag, each player said "I brag" as he raised another player. Another authority claims

that poker is merely a variation from the Irish game of spoil five.

If these explanations are true it is rather remarkable that neither the Spanish, French, English or Irish have a liking for the modern and perfected game. Of course we know how cordially Europeans detest innovations, but that would mean that they would cling to primero or ambigu, but they do not. In spite of all temptations to belong to other nations we must insist that poker is a thoroughly American game, so much so that it has never taken root outside of this country, nor even in Canada, except close to the border. General Schenck, our Minister to England years ago, is credited with an attempt to introduce it into that country for the delectation of the natives, but what he really did was to write a little manual of the game to relieve himself of the necessity of answering a thousand of individual questions. It was a passing craze, and we cannot flatter ourselves that the great American game has taken any hold of our British cousins. It is a pity 'tis true, because they don't know what they are missing. The Prince of Wales is the sporty boy of the English speaking people, and if he had been properly inoculated he would have set the fashion and then there would have been a grand opening for an international show down. But he is too old a dog to learn new tricks, and now

we will have to wait for the Duke of York. The fact that he is married and settled makes no difference, as it is a notorious fact that married men make the best poker players.

Therefore we may say with truth that America monopolizes the game of poker, and it certainly is the game that best fits our national character. To be a good poker player requires nerve, and we have that to perfection. It requires money, and we have more than any other nation. It is a draft on the physical strength, and we are strong; the players must have brains, and there is where we lead the world.

In addition to this it is such a simple game to learn. Anyone who knows how to play euchre or seven-up can be taught the game of poker in a half hour—and then spend the rest of his life in learning it. That is the main beauty of the game—you think you know it all after you have played ten hands and then after a hundred seances you begin to realize that there is something for you to learn. There is so much human nature in it, and human nature is so complex.

From these statements one would think that Germans could play the game to perfection but the fact that they don't shows that they can't. The German is stolid, but he is too stolid. Chess just suits him; it is a game where he can take an hour to a move, and everybody that looks on thinks he

is thinking. Of course the players have to think in poker, and theoretically the player is allowed to take his own time, but if he takes more than the fraction of a minute somebody is apt to make a few remarks.

Then there is the Frenchman. He is lively and vivacious, is apt to back his opinions with a wager and has none of the stolidity of the German, but he can't play poker. He is too excitable, he talks too much, he wants to gabble over the hands that have been played, and quick as he is, the game is too fast for him.

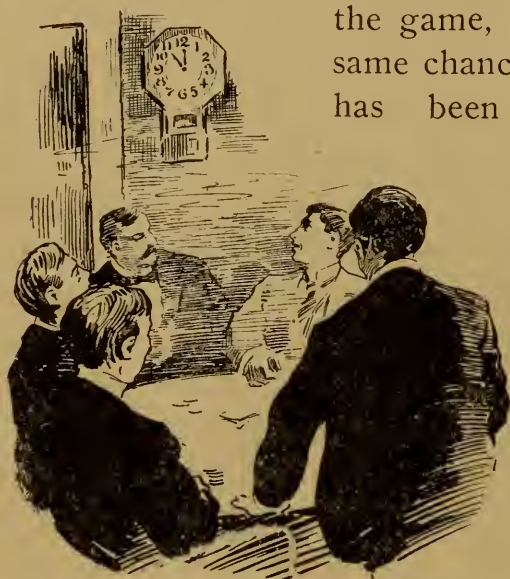
You might think that the Englishman would make the model poker player, but he doesn't. It would be all right if it wasn't for the bluffing part. Where the cards play themselves the Englishman is there every time, and he is a fine loser, but he can't get it through his hair that a man can win on the poorest hand through sheer force of nerve.

In every other game the cards practically play themselves, but in poker the man plays the cards.

For a crowd there is not a finer game on earth than faro on the square, but after all it is mere chance. Systems don't amount to anything; the system player is always broke, and the man that shuts his eyes and claps down his chips at random is just as liable to win as the man who has followed faro for years. You can't bluff; skill and experience count for nothing; you are playing against

a box that has no feelings to betray its contents, and after you have bucked up against it for ten years you know no more than the man who has just been introduced to the layout.

Then, unlike all other games, poker never ends. When the hock card is in sight in faro, that is the end of the deal; euchre and seven-up, and every other game has a certain number of points and that settles it, but a poker game can go on forever. The hundredth deal around does not differ from the first and a new player can come in at any stage of the game, and have just the same chance as the man who has been sitting in all



"Hello! It's Eleven, boys."

night. However, looked at in another light, perhaps that is one of the drawbacks. The man who is behind does not want to quit, and the man who is ahead is ashamed to pull

out, and between these two feelings the game sometimes drags on until the players have to quit through sheer weariness.

It is amusing to see some coteries making up

their minds to limit the game. They sit down and unanimously agree that they will not play a minute after 11 p. m., because—well, for a whole lot of reasons. When 11 p. m. comes along, it is let slide by, and then at about half past eleven some one says: "Hello! it's eleven, boys." Then they agree to play one more round, and when that is done, it is suggested that there be a round of jack pots. After about six rounds of jack pots, then there is one or two rounds of something else, and the end of it is that the gathering scatters nearer to 1 a. m. than 11 p. m. The only remedy for this sort of thing is to have one of the players' wives send after him, or for one man to get all the chips.

A good poker player would make a good actor. He is compelled to do a lot of acting during a long game. There are a few men who are gifted with faces that have about as much expression as a lump of dough and who never raise or lower their voices. It takes a heap of luck to beat that kind of a man, and most anybody would sooner play against a fellow who ripped and tore around occasionally. It is a study to see the face of a man who has just drawn a filler to two pairs. As he picks up the cards and sees that it is just what he wants, an expression of deep gloom or utter disgust settles on his countenance, which then subsides into a state of resignation, as if he might have known that he was too unlucky to catch anything worth having. He ap-

pears to be depressed and he sees the other fellow fingering the chips, and it is with the greatest reluctance he sees the bet and just lifts it one or two, making the muttered remark that his hand can't be beaten all the time. It is only when he makes the final raise that he comes from behind the mask, and the other fellow realizes that he has been lured on to destruction. Happy is the man that can play a full house and a pair of fours in exactly the same way—he has a fortune at his finger ends.

It is this acting and pretence and chaff that makes the game so delightful, and when these frillings are absent one might as well play chess. It is only a quarter of the fun to play the cards, the rest is in playing the players. And what a school of control it is! Officers in the army and navy are always capital players because they are taught to restrain their tempers and emotions in the line of duty until it becomes second nature to them. Look at Admiral Dewey's face and see a crack poker player. Note the square jaw, the immobile lips and dreamy indifferent eyes that seem to say "I haven't a pair in my hand, and I'm only waiting for you to chuck in a chip and you can have the pot." And then, without a change of countenance you can see him elevate the pot until you wouldn't call him under fours.

The man who loses his temper in a poker game will also lose his money. He will always be called

when he bluffs, and when he gets a big hand he will never get the value of it, because no one will buck against him for fear of offending him by beating the hand. If he doesn't enjoy losing his money he should affect indifference, or he is allowed to indulge in sarcastic remarks, provided they are witty as well. Nor does it do any harm to sympathize with a loser if you are ahead. When he comes to think it over afterwards, he will know that you didn't mean it, but it does him good at the time.

There is another beauty about the game of poker that I almost forgot to mention. The amount of the stake has nothing to do with the pleasure of the game. I don't mean to say that a high roller who has been in the habit of making it ten dollars to draw cards every time could calmly contemplate five cent ante with a fifty cent limit with the same crowd, but take him out of the environment and he could. I have played penny ante with a ten cent limit, and found myself getting hot around the collar when I had a flush beaten for thirty cents. When the pot has been fattened by two or three raises before the draw and everybody is in, the excitement is something tremendous when everybody stays, and the limit is bet the first crack. No, I'm not the least ashamed of it. The three other men could have lost ten thousand at a sitting and never felt it, but they wanted to play poker just for the fun of it, with no hard feelings afterwards. But

that is true about the way you feel, and I suppose is pretty much on the principle of hunting; the boy who is out after rabbits feeling his heart beat as high as the man in the jungle lying in wait for a tiger.

The "draw" in poker is an addition to the original game. At first it was played "straight," that is, you got five cards and had no chance to better your hand. Once in a very long while you may hear of straight poker being played, but it is more for the novelty than because it is liked. The draw is certainly the life of poker. There are such vast possibilities in it; so many utterly barren hands have blossomed into life under the influence of the draw that the player is constantly being buoyed up with hope. He is in the depths of despair indeed when he throws up his cards and won't draw to a little pair when there has been a raise. To do that and then look and see "what you would have got," and find that you would have had the winning hand, is one of the moments of anguish few can bear without wincing.

Innovations in poker have been many, and it would need a special chapter to describe them all, but the only one that has met with universal favor is the jack pot. First introduced as a variant, it spurred up many a lagging game, and made an always exciting wind up to a night's performance. From this it naturally progressed to jack pots on

any provocation, and finally on none at all—that is, the game became one of all jack pots. This comes under the head of the things that if you like them they are just the things you like. The main objection to jack pots is that they are apt to prove too expensive for small wads. While it is true that you can play even on a couple of jack pots, it is also true that you can go broke with equal facility, as you must come in on every deal until some one opens the pot, and then maybe you can't come in at all. But, as revolutions never go backward, the jack pot and its brothers are here to stay.

Here it may be noted that it is only within the last twenty years that straights have been played in the Western States. And, of course, if straights weren't played neither was the straight flush, so that four aces was an absolutely sure thing. The introduction of the straight flush was a good thing because it took away the sure thing element, and it allows a man to bet on four aces with a clear conscience. It doesn't seem so much like highway robbery when you know there is about one chance in ten thousand that your opponent has a straight flush against your aces, although you would be paralyzed if he had.

As said before—several times before, perhaps—this is no history of poker, with the dates and the names of the men who introduced this or that, and when they did it; neither is it an attempt to teach

anyone the game, which no one has ever yet done on paper or ever will; but it may incidently straighten out some controversial points over which men pull guns occasionally in certain localities, and in other places get black in the face talking over them.

There is no harm, however, in putting down here, for the benefit of the reader who has only heard about poker and never played it, the rank of the playing hands, so that he may see how exceedingly simple the game is. They run thus:

High card.

One pair.

Two pairs.

Threes.

Straight.

Flush.

Full hand.

Fours.

Straight flush.

Suit makes no difference; that is, a flush of hearts is no better than clubs or any other suit; only the rank of the cards is considered. Nor have I put down here all innovations, such as kilters, drags, blazes, and many others which are played in various localities, because you have to learn them when you run up against the men who play them, and that is time enough.

However this is enough to enable those who

laugh the loudest at a minstrel poker joke to occasionally have some perception as to what they are laughing at. It is a cold fact that the man who is away up on poker generally preserves a stony silence while the end man is describing his tribulations with four aces; it is the other fellow who has his girl with him that is convulsed with merriment. It is a good play; it makes her think he is a devil of a fellow when out of her sight.

However, that's neither here nor there. Here goes.

CHAPTER II.

THE EARLY DAYS OF POKER—STEAMBOAT GAMES— A MAMMOTH RAISE—BOWIE'S GOOD DEED.

We do not think that there is any railroad in this country where card playing is forbidden in its coaches, but in the East and North gambling is not



Playing with chips or money in sight would
be called down.

t o l e r a t e d . Of course, if two or more players are willing to put up so much a corner, and keep the cash out of sight, that is their business and the conductor cannot very well interfere, but such a thing as playing with chips or money in

sight would be called down in short order. In the West and South affairs are on an easier basis, and on many roads card betting is an every day affair, and creates no remark except from those intimately concerned. It is not so long ago since gangs of professional gamblers regularly worked all the

trains west of the Mississippi River, with every imaginable device to deceive the unwary. So openly was this done—and is still done on some roads—that it conveyed an impression that the train hands stood in with the sharpers, and got a whack at the spoil. *and sometimes did — and still do!*

That, however, is not a necessary sequence. The conductors and brakemen do not perhaps feel any great sympathy for the victims, because they ought to know enough to keep out of games with strangers after all the warnings that have been published. But the train hands would interfere, were it not for the fact that they would get small thanks from the suckers they saved and on the other hand stand a chance of being assaulted by the sharpers. So long as there is no rule of the company against the practice, the train hands are justified in supposing that the passengers know enough to protect themselves.

But, gambling in its palmyest days on the railroads never began to touch the days when steamboats were the chief means of inter-state travel. Before railroads criss-crossed the country in every direction, the two main arteries of travel were the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Practically there was no west or northwest before 1850, and the Ohio and Mississippi filled the bill for south, southwest and the middle section.

Those were the days before the war when cotton

was king. In those days the Southerners had lots of money and spent it freely. As a rule they did not even wait until the cotton was raised and baled, they mortgaged their crops in advance, and if money ran too short there was always a slave or two that could be disposed of at fancy figures.

The boats were nothing like the floating palaces such as now run on river and lake, but they were considered grand affairs for those days, and no doubt were comfortable enough, certainly more so for a three or four days journey than a railway coach is to-day. Here could be seen a group of men with broad straw hats, duck or linen suits of ample cut, sallow faces, fierce mustaches and keen eyes; men who were addicted to mint juleps and other fancy drinks; who were suave in speech and extravagantly polite, and who always carried revolvers and knives which they used on small provocation.

To such, card playing came as natural as drinking and they did more of each than eating or sleeping. It was nothing unusual for an open game to be run in the saloon all day and night from the time the boat left the wharf on the upper river until she landed at her destination. Private coteries were made up and played twenty-four hours at a stretch, the deck hands had their games at intervals and the pilot at the wheel took a hand when he was off duty. In short, everybody played or looked on,

ready to play at the first chance, if they had the money. Among friends, notes or I O U's would go, but in an open game only money counted, and it was "put up or shut up."

Here was the paradise of the professional poker player, and no boat was without its complement. They passed all their time traveling up and down the river, cheating when they had an opportunity, and playing a square game when they must. As a rule, they knew their men, and did not attempt any tricks on the planters who could lose a fortune without a murmur, but who would carve a man into bits at the least suspicion of foul play. They were loaded with money and won many a hand on a bluff, where the game was without limit. If a man demanded a sight for his money he might get it, but the game would end right there. Generally the man kept on until he had up every cent in the world, and sometimes even the most reckless Southern high roller would not hesitate to risk five thousand on a pair of fives.

Sometimes these gentry were beaten at their own game in this respect. On one occasion an army paymaster was traveling down the Ohio and dropped into a friendly game with three gentlemanly sharpers, and incidently dropped about five hundred dollars before he knew where he was at. About the same time he realized that he was up against it, and he settled down to get even.

Being an excellent player, he held his own for awhile, and even got a little ahead. His opponents soon saw that the ordinary methods of cheating would not answer with this man, so they resorted to crowding him out of every good pot by a system of raising each other. He tumbled to that plan also, but could make no objection, and bided his time. Presently it came.

It was his deal, so he felt morally certain that it was fair, and he dealt himself three queens. The age on his left lifted the ante, his chum helped it along and the pot was pretty fat when cards were drawn. The paymaster did not help his hand, but, as he said afterwards he felt sure that it was the best out. Then the betting began.

The man next the age bet ten dollars; the next man raised it fifty; the paymaster called, and the age raised another fifty. In turn he was lifted a hundred, the next man raised a hundred and the paymaster called again, only to be again raised by the age. This sort of thing went on until it became perfectly evident to the paymaster as well as the onlookers that the paymaster was not to be allowed to call.

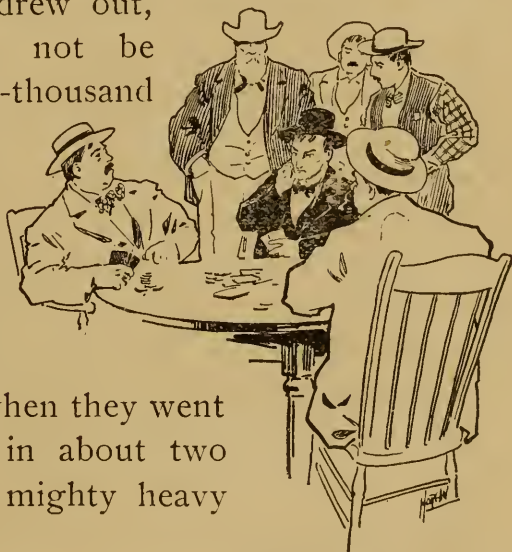
This merry little game of freeze out went on until there was \$2,600 on the table, and then at a preconcerted signal no doubt, the age raised five hundred, the next man saw the five hundred and raised it a thousand, and the third man saw both raisers and lifted it five thousand.

The paymaster looked on in apparent surprise.

"Sixty-five hundred?" he said, inquiringly.

“That’s what,” replied the age briefly. Then he added, as if overcome with disappointment, “I guess that lets me out.”

The paymaster sized up the situation. The money up represented the combined capital of the gang, and if he drew out, the raise would not be called, and the five-thousand dollar man would be allowed to walk off with the pot without a show down, and the sharpers would whack up when they went ashore. He put in about two minutes in some mighty heavy thinking.



"See here," he said at length. Now I'll give you fifteen minutes to raise the money, or the pot's mine.

"This rather hits me. I have the money to call, but I don't want to risk it all on one hand, as I tell you honestly I can't afford to lose it. Couldn't you cut down the pot and give me a show."

"I could but I won't," replied the five-thousand dollar man, with cool insolence. "You knew this

game was without limit when you came in. Now I'll give you just fifteen minutes to raise the money, or the pot's mine."

The paymaster turned to a tall, grave man standing by the table, a well known horse dealer, and an old player.

"Is that right, Mr. Shaw?" he asked.

"I am sorry to say it is," was the reply. "At the same time," he added, significantly, "if you suspect any crooked work"—

"No, no," said the paymaster, hastily. "I only wanted to know my rights in this affair. Fifteen minutes, you said?"

"Yes; and no more."

During the entire game a young well dressed man had been standing near the paymaster, watching with evident anxiety the progress of the game. It was his clerk, although no one knew of their relations and to the clerk the paymaster now turned and said, "Charley, go to my state room and bring me my valise."

The clerk who had been very red now turned pale, and made an effort to speak, but was silenced with an imperative wave of the hand. He went away and when he returned and placed a bulky valise by the paymaster's knee, he was trembling in every limb.

By this time the tension was tremendous. Every eye was fixed on the paymaster, and the gamblers

began to realize that something was going to happen that boded them no good. The paymaster opened the bag, and took out package after package of crisp banknotes and laid them on the table.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, pleasantly, "since you insist upon playing without limit I am obliged to acquiesce. I will see your sixty-five hundred and raise you fifty thousand!"

Two of the gamblers gave vent to an involuntary cry of surprise, while the third fell back in his chair with white face and clenched lips. The paymaster put his hand in a casual way in his breast pocket, his clerk did the same, and Mr. Shaw moved a step nearer the table. But the gamblers were in no mood for violence, especially as they saw no sympathy in the eyes of the spectators.

The paymaster pulled out his watch, and in a tone as insolent as the other had assumed, said:

"I'll give you just fifteen minutes to see the raise, or I'll take the pot."

The three men looked at each other in mute despair. There wasn't a station within ten miles and not a man on the boat that would have let them have fifty thousand on four aces under the circumstances. They sat in moody silence for fifteen minutes, as if hoping that the money would drop through the roof, and at the end of that time, arose and walked away with as much indifference as they could assume. At the first landing they got off

and the paymaster packed his money back in the valise. It was Uncle Sam's money to pay troops, and if he had lost it, he had determined to kill himself; as it was he determined to never again play poker with strangers—at least, without a limit.

Another anecdote of the river days of long ago brings to view a character that could hardly exist now and be famous in the same way. The scene is laid on the steamer Orleans, running between Natchez and New Orleans in the fall of 1832.

A young man of Natchez, going North in summer on his wedding trip, had been commissioned by a number of merchants and planters in his neighborhood to collect various accounts due them in New York and other places which he proposed to visit. The young man was the soul of honor, but not very strong in resolution; in fact, he was rather an easy mark if worked in the proper way.

Unfortunately this became known to the ring of gamblers who were working the rivers, and they laid their plans accordingly. Some of their members made his acquaintance in New York, and learned that he would return South by way of Pittsburg, where he was to take the boat for Louisville, and after spending a few days there, take another boat for New Orleans that stopped at Natchez. In pursuance of the plan, one of the gang met him on the boat at Pittsburg and intro-

duced him to two alleged Louisiana planters who made themselves quite agreeable. On the way down to Louisville, several friendly games of poker were played, in all of which the young man came out a little ahead, so that he was in high good humor when they got ready to pluck him in earnest, which was on board the Orleans.

The game was played with a short deck of thirty-two cards, the same as a euchre deck, which of course was conducive to holding fat hands in almost every deal, and led to high betting. The three confederates worked the cross lifting trick on the victim, together with an occasional bit of cheating, until the poor fellow had but a few thousands left when the boat neared Vicksburg, where it was the sharpers' intention to give him the shake. The poor fellow was already nearly crazed with his losses, realizing that he was not only ruined but dishonored, and his young wife was in terrible distress over this unlooked for termination of their honeymoon. Yet he kept on playing on the desperate chance of redeeming his money.

When the boat was within a half day's run of Vicksburg there came on board a tall man with a smooth shaven face, who looked like a preacher, and he with others stood looking at the game in the men's cabin. At midnight the last dollar of the dupe had been raked in, and rising from the table, he rushed wildly to the side of the vessel, and was

only prevented by his wife's arms from throwing himself overboard.

Suddenly the clerical looking man made his appearance by the side of the distracted wife, and said, quietly, "Take him to your cabin, and watch him closely until I return."



Was only prevented by his wife's arms from throwing himself overboard.

Going back to the cabin where the gamblers were having a hilarious time at the bar, the stranger drew out an immense roll of notes, and asked the bartender to change a hundred dollar bill.

"I'd like to oblige you, but I can't,"

was the reply. "Perhaps some of these gentlemen can do it."

One of the gamblers very readily made the desired change, and also invited the stranger to have a drink. They soon fell into conversation, and it was not long until a game of poker was proposed, and after some demur the stranger consented.

The ante was five dollars, and as there was al-

ways a straddle, it rarely cost less than forty dollars to play, and the betting ran rather high. The stranger managed to keep a little ahead of the game until near morning, and then came the crucial hand.

The pot was fattened up to nearly five hundred dollars before the draw, and then the betting was fast and furious. Finally two of the players dropped out, leaving only a big whiskered fellow and the stranger. As the bets rose by thousands the gambler's face began to assume an anxious look, while the other was pale and cool, rather sleepy in fact, although he never took his eyes off his adversary's hands.

At last more than seventy thousand dollars were piled up on the cloth, and the stranger said quietly, "I call you." Then he added sharply: "One moment, please." He laid his cards face up on the table, disclosing four kings and a ten. "This is poker, and five cards constitute a hand. If you can show four aces, and no more than five cards in your hand, the pot is yours. But," and here, with a sudden movement he drew from his coat a long and keen knife, "if you have more or less than five cards I will kill you where you sit."

The gambler held his cards in his hands in front of him, and it was noticed that they trembled perceptibly. The stranger held the deadly knife in his hand, and although he was still pale, and his

voice had not been raised above its usual tones, his eyes glowed like fire, and he looked like an avenging demon. All three gamblers were armed, but none made a movement to draw a weapon, and they sat there for a minute the very pictures of baffled villainy.

"Come," said the stranger, smoothly. "Your hand has been called; what have you got? Don't

take your hands out of sight; show down the cards just as they are."



But! and here, with a sudden movement he drew from his coat a long and keen knife.

The gambler wavered, looked at his companions furtively and saw no encouragement in their faces, and then

with a muttered curse, threw his hand into the deck. The stranger with his left hand

took off his large felt hat, swept the money into it, and clapped it on his head, keeping the knife in his right hand all the time.

"Now, gentlemen," he said, suavely, "I am going to restore the money you have robbed to the victim. It is fortunate for you," he added, turning to his opponent, "that you did not disclose

your hand with its four aces, because it had six cards, and you wouldn't have been alive now. The next time you fleece a gentleman learn to have more mercy."

As he turned to go after this little lecture, one of the gamblers cried: "Who the devil are you?"

"James Bowie," was the answer.

The voice was like velvet, but the sharpers jumped as if shot. Bowie was known from one end of the river to the other, and it was a surprising chance that he had not been recognized by any one in the cabin. But the name was enough; the gamblers shrank away from this dreaded man who, without another glance, made his way to the cabin where the wife was still trying to soothe her husband's grief.

Bowie emptied the contents of his hat before the astounded pair, and in a few minutes the young man was in possession of all that he had lost.

"Now, my dear sir," said the noted duellist, "let me advise you as a man of the world to never touch another card. You see how nearly it has brought you to shame; believe me it can never bring you happiness. Before I leave you, let me have your sworn promise."

The young man took the oath with tears in his eyes, and then begged that his benefactor accompany him home, but Bowie refused, and at the first landing place, got off the boat, and they never saw him afterward.

CHAPTER III.

POKER IN WASHINGTON—A STORY OF HENRY CLAY—
CABINET PLAYERS—MAHONE'S RULE—
WHEN REED WAS CALLED.


Washington is popularly regarded as the great poker center of the United States, and there are many reasons for the belief. There is a feverish air about Washington life that conduces to card playing. Public office is largely a game of chance in this country, despite the strides made by the Civil Service, and the man who goes to Washington in an official capacity feels that he will be there to-day and home to-morrow. Very few of the thousands of clerks regard their places as more than temporary until they have been there at least five years, and by that time they have contracted habits of careless spending that they can hardly throw off.

Then there comes every two years to the nation's capital a number of new congressmen who feel flushed with wealth on a salary of five thousand a year. Many of them could not earn half that sum at their occupation, and especially as the money comes easily they fritter away a great deal of it in dissipation. To these classes are to be added the diplomatic corps, many of the attaches being young bloods sent abroad for the good of

the family, and they have nothing to do with their salaries but to spend them in good living, and that includes card playing. In addition, when Congress is in session, the whole town is in a fever of excitement, and the easiest way to work off the surplus steam is with a pack of cards.

Washington is full of poker stories, because from all accounts, every administration, at least from Jackson's down, indulged in the game. Lincoln didn't; he was of too serious mood to care for the game; and of course, Hayes wouldn't touch a card; although there is reason to think that he knew something about the game. Arthur was a splendid player; Garfield, only fair. Cleveland's cabinet was full of poker players; and—although you wouldn't think it to look at his grave and almost solemn features—Gresham was king of them all. Carlisle is a shrewd player but lacks nerve—that is, he can't bluff successfully.

It doesn't sound likely, but they say that Cleveland did not learn to play poker until he came to Washington. He went off on one of his famous duck hunting expeditions with Gresham and Carlisle, and when he came back he had been inoculated. After that he took a hand whenever the opportunity offered, but he always played a small game; rarely winning or losing more than ten dollars at a sitting. Dan Lamont used to play heavily before he got into public life, but when he saw the possibilities he dropped poker.



Going back to the old timers, practically all of the congressmen before the war played poker, and did not try to conceal it as they do now. Henry Clay was a famous player, and won a fortune in his time. There is a funny story about Clay that illustrates the character of the man.

There was in Washington an old darkey whom Clay had befriended, a poor fellow who had quite

a reputation among his people as a preacher. One day as the great Kentucky senator was strolling down Pennsylvania Avenue, the old fellow tackled him. It was on Sunday morning.

"Well, Bob," said he, "you're up early."

"Yes, Marse Henry; de airly bird ketches de worm."

"Oh, you are worm hunting, are you?"

"No, Marse Henry," said the old fellow, solemnly, "I'sè lookin' for help for my little church."



Bob, here is fifty dollars that I won at poker last night.

"I won't give you a cent," said Clay, decidedly. "I gave you something only last week for your church."

"Yes, Marse Henry, so you did; and dat," raising his eyes piously, "dat's a treasure laid up for you in Hebben."

"Oh, is it?" said the Senator, smiling. Then he pulled out of his pocket a roll of bills, and continued. "Bob, here is fifty dollars I won at poker last night. Now, if you can reconcile it with your conscience to use money got in that way for church purposes, take it along."

Old Bob bowed and pulled his cap.

"Sarvant, Marse Henry; thankee, sah. God do move in a musterious way his wonders to perform."

And he walked off with the money.

Another Kentucky man, a senator, although not from that State, says that his seat there and all he has besides is due to a poker game, and tries to prove it with the following story.

"I was born and bred in old Kentucky, and strange as it sounds, it was in a highly moral town where games of chance were not tolerated. It was no use bucking against the law; no matter what the position in life of the offender, if he was caught gambling up he went. But of course there was gambling, and the very lawyers and judges that enforced the law would take every opportunity to have a quiet game.

"One night, during a June term of court, the judge and visiting lawyers arranged for a game, and as it would never do to make such a venture in the hotel, a flatboat moored at the foot of the levee was pitched upon as an ideal place. It was supposed that it would be out of sight and hearing of the moral little burg.

"Accordingly that night two tables were set up in the cabin, and nine members of the legal profession were bending over the game with all the native ardor of Kentucky gentlemen. It was about this time that I, in company with a friend, strolled in the vicinity of the flatboat. I was about twenty years of age and had no money, and my friend was on a par.

"On discovering the old folks thus engaged a desire to be humorous swept over us. We were law students; they were full fledged, and that was reason enough for the joke. We cast off the boat, and silently she drifted away on the dark bosom of the river. The grave and reverend gamesters drew and filled and straddled, until along about two o'clock in the morning, and then Colonel Bugg concluded he had better quit, and look over his brief for next day. The gallant old fellow put on his hat, bade every one good night, walked off where he thought the gang plank ought to be—and walked into twenty feet of water!

"Of course there was a howl for help, and he

was fished out with considerable difficulty. Then the startling discovery was made that the boat was twenty miles down stream. The whoops and yells of the voyagers finally brought a tug to the rescue, and they were towed back to town—only to find the town officers waiting to run in the whole party. In the frank enthusiasm of youth we had related our doings, and there was no escape from the stern rule of justice.



Walked off where he thought the gang plank ought to be.

"There was a terrible row over the affair. Publicly we were commended, privately we were threatened with death by the gentlemen we had betrayed, and we knew that some of them would shoot on sight. We took counsel of our fears, and lit out for the West.

"That was forty-five years ago. My partner in villainy is now a United States Judge, and I am

a Senator. We often discuss the past, and we lay everything to that flatboat poker game."

✓ When General Mahone held Virginia in his vest pocket he was a figure in Washington poker circles. He was cool and nervy, and withal played poker like a gentleman.

Once he was in a game at Chamberlin's, which included several Senators, and nobody was winning or losing very much; in fact the game was rather slow which probably suggested what follows. A deal was just beginning where Mahone was the age, and the General had anted when a waiter called him from the room to speak to some gentleman who wanted to see him.

As he closed the door behind him the Western Senator who was dealing remarked:

"Let's put up a joke on Mahone. I'll deal him three queens on the go-off and fix up B——— next him with a straight flush, and then let Mahone get another queen in the draw. I'd like to see how long and how hard the General will bet four queens. Of course we can give the money back afterwards."

The others thought this a good joke, and the hands were fixed up accordingly. Everybody had picked up his hand when the General came back, and as he took his seat and reached for his cards, the dealer remarked, "Hurry up, General, we're waiting for you."

General Mahone looked at his hand, discarded, and said: "Give me one card."

The dealer gave the General the fourth queen which lay on the top of the deck, and gave B—— next to him one card—the diamond he was after. And then they all leaned back to see B—— and the General buck each other, and to hear what the General would say when he lost on four queens.

It was B——'s first bet, and he threw down a white chip. Of course everybody was confident the General would raise him. That was where they were disappointed. To their amazement, and without a moment's hesitation, without a word of comment or any gesture that would indicate either surprise or disgust, Mahone threw his hand into the discard, and as nobody had bet against B—— he took in the little pot without opposition.

Mahone then reached for the deck and proceeded to calmly shuffle the cards for the next deal. The others looked at each other in surprise, and the Senator who had put up the hands, said with a laugh:

"B——, you had better give the General his ante."

Then they all laughed, while Mahone betrayed mild surprise.

"Why didn't you bet your four queens?" asked another player. "Did you suspect a joke or think some one was trying to rob you?"

"No, sir," replied General Mahone, with perfect gravity, "I have the utmost confidence in the honesty of every gentleman present, and I haven't the remotest idea that any one of you would rob me, but I make an inflexible rule to never bet a high hand when I have been absent through the deal. To be out of the room and then to return and pick up three queens and get a fourth on a one card draw is to me very alarming. So, of course, I threw my hand in the discard."

"Well, General," said the Senator who dealt the cards, "it was a joke, and I must compliment you on the manner in which you received it. It showed, sir, that you are a Southern gentleman, and was complimentary alike to yourself and to us."

Then they called in a couple of cold bottles, and the game went on.

✓ Ex-Speaker Reed used to relax on poker once in a while, but he was very moderate, and they say in Washington that he never raised more than fifty cents in his life. He was also noted for never winning anything, but takes his ill fortune with cool good nature.

On one occasion at the Shoreham a small game was raging with great fury, and by some miracle Reed managed to capture a nine full. He saw visions of fortune before him, especially as Riley of ✓ Pennsylvania—a man who would bet a quarter without a quiver—showed a disposition to dispute

the pot with him. So he went diligently to work to raise Riley. And the reckless Riley on his part invariably raised the Speaker, without any reverence whatever.

So they kept see-sawing until the total of the wealth on the green cloth must have equalled six dollars. At last

Reed called, and to his disgust Riley laid down a queen full. As he spread the cards out on the table, Reed peered over them with much the same air that he used to employ to count the House on a rising vote, and then as



He saw visions of fortunes before him.

he settled back in his chair, he drawled forth disgustedly that formula wherewith the Speaker announces that a call for the ayes and noes has been voted. -

"Clearly a sufficient number," he said, and Riley raked in the pot.

✓ Senator Wolcott is one of the coolest men living when engaged in a poker game. Like most men whose early manhood has been spent on the

frontier, he learned the value of a poker hand, and he was known as a limit player all over Colorado before he ever gained any fame as a lawyer.

Wolcott once found himself in a poker game where three of the other players were working a sure thing. They were professionals and were after a big bundle that Wolcott was known to have, as well as looking out for the wad of Durkin, the fifth player, a mining operator. Durkin was unconscious but Wolcott knew in twenty minutes after the first hand was dealt that the intention was to rob him, and set his mind to find his way out.

At last he was dealt a pat flush of diamonds, made up of the five, seven, eight, nine and jack. He skinned these cards over and did a heap of thinking. He felt in his bones that a flush would be no good on the show down, but he chipped in and stayed to draw cards.

He wasn't raised before the draw, and that strengthened his impression, so he looked over his red hand and concluded to draw a card in order if possible to straighten the sequence. He pondered a long time which to let go but finally threw away the jack, and called for a card. The dealer could not conceal his surprise at his wanting any, but gave him the card.

Wolcott picked it up and found that he had got the six spot of diamonds. He never turned a hair. The betting began and he nursed the sequence, and

just stayed along, letting the other fellows do the raising. At last it got down to Wolcott and one of the professionals. Finally there was a call, and the other man showed four queens. Wolcott laid down the five, six, seven, eight and nine of diamonds and swept in the pot. Then he took Durkin by the collar and marched him out of the room. He said afterwards that it was the greatest piece of luck that he ever had in a poker game.

✓ Senator Harris, of Tennessee, used to be an inveterate poker player, and his limit was penny-ante. During the struggle over the Wilson Tariff Bill, when the whole country was churned up, the House was surprised one day to see the venerable statesman wandering about inquiring for Representative Tarsney. When he found him, the two men engaged in an animated conversation for ten minutes, and the people in the gallery, and all the correspondents were tremendously excited. Tarsney was a member of the Ways and Means Committee, and this talk with Harris was no doubt due to some tariff complication that would affect the pending bill.

The correspondents hammered out many an exciting tale about this conference, and it was only by interviewing Tarsney that the truth came out.

"Tarsney," said Senator Harris, solemnly, "I want you to come to my rooms to-night to play penny ante. Do you play penny ante, Tarsney?"

"Yes," said Tarsney, with equal solemnity, "I do, whenever I can gain the consent of my wife."

"Then," said Senator Harris, fiercely, "get your wife's consent, and come over to my room to-night. Blackburn will be here, and I will get DuBois. The limit is twenty-five cents, and the ante is two-call-five. You know the rules of my room, sir?"

"No, I don't."

"Well, sir," went on Senator Harris, still keeping up his tone of determined fury, "the rules of my room are these. As we sit down to the game I give every gentleman present a drink of Tennessee whiskey that is fifty years old, sir. After that nobody gets a drink unless he loses money to me. If those rules are agreeable to you, sir, I shall be proud to see you at my rooms to-night."

Tarsney was there, and he took care to lose a pot occasionally to the host.

As a rule the diplomatic corps is treated with elaborate politeness by the residents of Washington as it is understood that they are not used to our ways and it is advisable to not convey wrong impressions. But occasionally, the love of a joke gets away with the young bloods, and they play a prank.

Herr Von S—— of the German embassy was a popular diplomat, and had been taught the game of poker, or the rudiments, and that was the basis of the joke. A party of young bloods got him

into a social game and on the fifth or sixth hand, dealt him six cards. On discovering this fact, he laid them down, remarking that he would not play that hand.

The dealer asked the reason, and when told, pretended to be highly offended, and declared that it was a reflection on him, and that the German must play the hand. The foreigner reiterated the statement that he would not play it. Then the fun began.

The players began to wrangle among themselves over the decision, took sides, and in a few minutes, there was a flash of steel, pistols leaped from hip pockets, dirks, bowie knives, and even razors were drawn. The air also became lurid with profanity that would have enlightened a cowboy in the elasticity and scope of the English language.

Appalled at such an amazing spectacle, Herr Von S—— must have felt cold chills running up and down his spine, but he never weakened. With a nerve and manliness that equalled anything ever seen on the field of battle, he rose to his feet, and said, "Gentlemen, I know not this game entirely, but I have been told that I am right. I will not play these cards. My life is in your hands."

The joke had gone too far however for the young bloods to be satisfied with such a tame ending, and they kept up their wild whoops, and the flourishing of weapons. Then they apparently be-

gan fighting among themselves, shooting point blank, clutching throats with vengeful fury and stabbing like wild men. In the midst of it all the German made his way out of the room.



"I will not play these cards. My life is in your hands."

Afterward, in speaking of the truly American game of cards in which he had taken part, he gave a brief and very graphic account of the manner in which his exit

had been accomplished:

"I was a great many times getting out of the door."

One night on Capitol Hill there was a remarkable game of poker, in which no Congressmen or diplomats were engaged. There were just four old cronies, all business men. They had just dropped in, and began to talk over old times when they were youngsters. Some one remembered the way they used to play poker with gun wads for chips and a dry goods box in the back shed for a table, so it wasn't singular that some other one suggested

that it would be a good idea to have a game just for old times.

The host got out a deck of cards and his wife's button bag, and it happened that there were twenty buttons apiece. Then there was a raking of pockets which disclosed the fact that there wasn't more than two dollars in cash in the crowd.

The game then proceeded, but after only a few hands the host remarked in a casual way that he wished they were playing sure enough poker. The man to his left skinned over his cards, acquiesced in the desire, and, strange to say, the two other men said they were more than willing to make it the real thing for that hand anyhow.

The buttons had been bet already, and as there was no money in the party, it was decided to use simple articles easy of identification as markers for the amounts each player should bet. With this understanding the limit was taken off, and the fun began.

The host bet ten dollars and put up a cigar as a marker, and the next man raised it and shoved in a key ring as a representative of forty dollars. So it went around until there was on the table an agglomeration of the various things men carry in their pockets.

When they got ready to draw cards the expectant dealer was amazed to find that none of the players wanted any, and just to be in the fashion

he didn't take any himself. Then the betting began furiously, and everything the players had with them, whose disappearance would not

cause too much inquiry on the part of their wives were put up as markers for their bets.



"This goes for sixty dollars" he said, hoarsely, "I've got four jacks."

At last it came around to the host for the fifth time and he determined to call. He reached out and picked up an empty coal scuttle.

"This goes for sixty dollars," he

said, hoarsely. "I've got four jacks."

The other players laid down respectively a nine full on five, a seven full on kings and four deuces. The winner swept all the markers into the coal scuttle and the game broke up. The next day the coal scuttle man received \$260 apiece from each of the other men.

CHAPTER IV.

POKER IN LONDON AND PARIS—JOHN BULL'S TWO PAIR—A GAME WITH THE PRINCE OF WALES.

It is a long cry from Washington to London, but not where cards are concerned. As explained at the beginning poker has never taken deep root in Great Britain, but it occasionally crops out with generally humorous results.

On the staff of the American legation in London some years ago there was a Major, who, like all army officers, could play a stiff game, but who had been rather out of his element for several months, as our Minister was a man who frowned on gambling in any form and that kept the staff subdued. But one day there came to town a couple of the Major's friends from the land of the stars and stripes, and the trio had two or three little sittings to the refreshment of all concerned.

Then one night the Americans brought to the Major's rooms a Scotch manufacturer and an English M. P., a regular John Bull, gentlemanly and pig-headed as they make them. After drinks and cigars around, one of the Americans suggested poker, but the Major demurred. Poker, he remarked, was a very dangerous game, particularly

as his friends (he modestly omitted any reference to himself) were hot stuff, and it was possible to lose considerable money at the pastime without half trying.

At this the Scotchman remarked that he had learned the game in the States, and he thought he was cautious enough to restrain his ardor, and the Englishman said that he knew he had to learn the game sometime in his life, and this seemed a fitting opportunity.

"I'll take five pounds' worth of chips as a starter," said he, "and if some one will kindly mark the value of the hands on a piece of paper, I'll pick up the game as I go along."

"I don't like the idea of playing poker with a man who knows absolutely nothing about the game, particularly in my own rooms," said the Major, with an anxious look at the others.

But the Englishman was insistent, and as there was risk of offending him if refusal was persisted in, the Major gave way. The American who sat on the right of the M. P. marked the value of the hands on a sheet of paper, and passed it around. It was all right, and, after a few other minutes passed in explaining about the deal and the draw, the game started.

The limit was five shillings. For an hour there was no decided advantage, and although, like all new players, the Englishman had a proclivity for

coming in on every hand, he held his own. He also showed the peculiarity of new players in regarding two pairs as a world beater, and he remarked several times that they looked much bigger than threes.

In the middle of the second hour there was an intermission for refreshments. You know what that is. Nobody stops playing; time is too precious for that. Each man grabs a sandwich or whatever there is to devour and chews at it, while with the other hand he skins his cards or fingers his chips. This was a new feature to the Englishman, and it seemed to affect his luck when the game was resumed in earnest. At any rate he made a half dozen disastrous bets, on all of which the Major profited.

Then the game went on in a monotonous way, and the Americans could not fail to observe that the M. P. was thinking that this great American game was no great shakes after all. Then, of course, came the star hand, of which there is always one if you play long enough.

It was the Major's deal, and the Englishman had the ace. The American on his left dropped out, but all the others came in. There was a raise before the draw, and the man who had dropped out looked at the Englishman's hand and advised him to stay. The Englishman took one card; the other three drew three cards.

The first man bet a chip, the Scotchman saw it, the Major lifted it five shillings and the M. P. bet the limit. The American—who had three tens and a pair of fours—reciprocated, the Scotchman prudently dropped out, and the Major tilted it the limit. The American looked at his full house with an inquiring air, and simply stayed, but when the Major and the honorable member from Stogis-on-the-Des raised the limit again, he soured on his

hand and threw it into the deck. This left the betting between the Major and John Bull.

After about six raises the Major thought it had gone far enough, and said, warningly, "I'd go a bit slow, old man,

remember, this is your first game of poker."

By this time the other American had taken a look at the Englishman's hand, and whispered something

The three had a drink and seemed so hilarious that they nearly choked.

in his ear, with the result that he promptly



raised the Major. Then both Americans went off to the other end of the room where there was a bottle of the real stuff, and took a drink with much merriment. After about ten more raises the Englishman had to buy more chips, which gave the Major another opportunity to remind him that this was his first game of poker and that he must not bet over the strength of his hand.

"That's all right," responded the stubborn John Bull, and he threw another half sovereign in the pot.

"Now, old chap," said the Major, solemnly, "don't blame me if you lose your money."

At this the two Americans took the Scotchman over to the sideboard, and the three had a drink and seemed so hilarious that they nearly choked. The Major was rather nettled at this, and remarked that they had better be giving their friend some good advice, than laughing like hyenas. The only result of their admonition was that the three men went off into convulsions, and one man actually went into the adjoining bed room, threw himself down, and fairly yelled. Whenever the Major suggested to the Englishman that he really ought to call or else he would be sorry for it, there came another roar from the trio.

Finally John Bull got to the end of his money and putting his last half sovereign in the pot, he said, "I'll call you. What have you got?"

Hearing this the others rushed up to the table. The Major looked at the pot, but did not reach for it. He did not want to be in a hurry because he knew it was his, and he hated to hurt the Englishman's feelings. At last he said very slowly and almost sorrowfully, "I've got four jacks."

The Englishman laid his cards face upwards on the table, and asked "Do I win?" He had four kings.

It took the Major some time to take in the full humor of the situation, but he did. The painful feature of the affair was that the Englishman thought he was betting his money on two pairs. He had simply followed the advice of the American, who, upon seeing his cards, had advised him to "bet until he was dead."

He did not go quite so far as that, which was a good thing for the Major.

It is only a step across the Channel, and we are in Paris—"gay Paree," you know, where all good Americans go when they die. Of course Parisians play cards, and they actually play poker, but in a way that Americans would hardly recognize. It is a kind of mixture of a sand bag and a freeze out, with the dangerous qualities of each.

It starts off in a club, and a steward or croupier, or whatever his name may be, holds in his hands a list of names. The first six on the list are "sitting in." Each has declared his stake; one \$50, another

\$80, another \$75, and so on, the limit of the declaration being, for instance, \$100. Chips are handed to each to represent the varying values, and the game begins.

The limit of betting is the amount of chips before the player. The man with the \$100 worth of chips, to make a supposition, bets all of it on the third deal. What becomes of the man with \$50, if he has a good hand? He may put up his fifty dollars, and get a sight for his money, and so with the others. If he loses he is gone—scratched off the list—and the steward reads off another name to take his place.

There is no half way about it; it is win or bust all the time. The Frenchmen have understood that poker is a game of bluff and high betting, and nothing else; they have missed entirely the quieter features that make it loved. If four out of the six are willing to play moderately, following something like the value of their hands, the other two would shame them, dare them, crowd them. The average Frenchman cannot stand to be ridiculed. Around the table is a double row of spectators, and they are in a continual state of awe and admiration over the skill and daring of the bluffers, so the sensible fellows are goaded until in a rash moment they plunge down their little pile, and out they go.

Every once in a while an American gets intro-

duced to this French game of poker, and makes up his mind to stand these sports on their heads, but he doesn't. There are too many angularities about the game for him to grasp in less than a half dozen sittings, and by that time his money is all gone.

On one of his flying trips to the Continent, our Parson Davies ran up against this sweet game, and after being scratched five nights in succession, declared that he thought poker as played in Paris decidedly immoral.

It does not follow from this that there is no real poker played in Paris. There are enough Americans, and all kinds of Americans to introduce anything. They play among themselves, and have introduced it into boarding houses, but they cannot get the Frenchmen to play the game among themselves as it should be played. What the Parisians need is an American Minister like Schenck to educate them.

As said once before General Schenck was not really an inveterate poker player, although he will go down to history with a reputation on account of the little treatise he wrote on the game, but he could play with the best of them when in the humor. A big corporation lawyer tells a story that illustrates what a high roller Schenck could be.

"I was in London on business," said the lawyer, "and having known Schenck in America, called on

him. He greeted me very cordially, showed me around town and in a general way did the proper thing.

"'By the way,' said he, as we were about to separate one morning, 'what are you going to do this evening?'

"I replied that I had nothing particular in view.

"'Then,' said Schenck, cordially, 'there is going to be a poker game at the Langham, and if you care for the exercise I'd like to take you in. The Prince of Wales will be one of the party.'

"Of course I couldn't resist that. I reflected that it isn't often that an American citizen has a chance to draw cards, raise and bluff against a real prince, not an imitation Russian affair, but a sure enough heir apparent. I didn't care two cents for poker—and, as a true born American, I ought not to have cared for a prince of the blood—but it would be an experience to tell my children when they grew up, how their daddy beat the Prince of Wales. Of course I counted on that.

"So I told Schenck I'd be there without fail, and he expressed himself as very well pleased. One thing I forgot. I didn't ask about the limit, but as I had about two thousand dollars in good American money, I felt elegantly and superciliously safe. Even if there was pretty high play, I would be there.

"Six o'clock came and I was at the Langham,

and the others came in later. With the Prince of Wales came Anselm Rothschild and the Duke of Marlborough, and these with Minister Schenck and myself were to make up the game. I want to say right here that the Prince is a gentleman from the ground up. If he feels himself any better than his fellow men, and no one can blame him if he does, he never shows it, at least to Americans. They have a saying in England that if the tight little island ever becomes a republic, the Prince of Wales would be elected President by a unanimous vote, and I believe it.

"Just after I was presented to the Prince I asked Schenck in a whisper what limit was usually fixed at these poker festivals, and, to my horror, he replied in a careless aside that there was no limit.

"The Prince wouldn't listen to such thing as a limit, explained Schenck. It would be beneath his dignity to suggest a thing like that.

"I felt a cold chill running down my back, and my two thousand dollars reposing in the vault of the Bank of England began to assume the appearance of very small potatoes. Here I was about to buck up against England's heir apparent with the entire revenues of Great Britain to draw upon and a kindly Parliament to pay his debts, the Duke of Marlborough with something like a million a year, and a Rothschild, who could write his check for ten millions without turning a hair. I began to think of home and the dear old flag, and all that.

"It started the perspiration, but I was in and couldn't get out, so I made up my mind to stay long enough to lose about a hundred dollars, and then suddenly grow ill and extract myself. It wouldn't do to have stomach ache, which was a confoundedly plebeian ailment, and I deplored the fact that I was not subject to fits, but I thought I might ring in a pain of some kind, or perhaps fall



"And the first thing his Royal Highness said was, 'Give me one thousand pounds worth of chips.'"

back on cold feet. Perhaps the Prince had been occasionally troubled in that way, and would sympathize with me.

"As we sat down, however, two things happened to disturb my dream of cold feet. Schenck was to bank and the first thing His Royal Highness said was:

“ ‘Give me one thousand pounds worth of chips.’ And he said it with no more emphasis than if it had been: ‘Pass the pie.’

“I began to realize that I was liable to drop my little old two thousand the first hand, and perhaps before I had a chance to draw cards, and I inwardly prayed for an earthquake. But earthquakes only visit London about once in a thousand years.

“To add to my grief the Rothschild chap placed at his elbow a book of signed checks, with a blank space for him to write in the amount, which he did with a pencil, in a careless way as if he were keeping count of hams. The only glimmer of hope on the horizon was the conduct of the Duke of Marlborough. He acted like a perfect gentleman and only bought two thousand dollars worth of checks.

“I steered by him, and also bought two thousand dollars worth. Schenck gave me an approving smile, and I learned afterward that I did the proper thing. It would not have been etiquette to buy as much as the Prince. I was mighty glad of that. I thought since that I would have been in a fine fix if etiquette had required me to stack up with the Prince. I am afraid that I would have stuck our Minister for his year’s salary, and he would never have spoken to me again.

“The horrors of that eventful night I can never recall without a shudder. The ante was two pounds—ten dollars—but that was a mere detail.

The Prince would look at his cards in a careless way, and remark 'I raise that a hundred pounds.'

"The bloated villain Rothschild would flip the pasteboards in an indifferent manner, and observe, with the same indifference to my feelings, 'I'll see that and go fifty pounds better.'

"These blood curdling remarks would take place before the draw, you understand. And then they would lean back, and puff at their fifty-cent cigars, call for what cards they wanted, and talk about bets of five to ten thousand dollars, or anything that happened to come into their wealthy heads.

"Oh, how I wished I was a copper king of Montana, or a coal baron of Pennsylvania, or any other fellow rolling in wealth, so that I could have socked it to them! I laid down hand after hand because I couldn't stand the strain. I'd pick up two stout pair, get hoisted a couple of hundred before the draw, and then get knocked out with a bet of two thousand, and set back and see the Prince or Rothschild pull in the pot on a pair of nines.

"That's the sort of company I was in, and I didn't see my way out the least bit. Lots of times I felt morally certain that they were bluffing, but I couldn't risk five thousand dollars on my opinion, and I had to let it go. It wasn't poker at all; it was more like highway robbery. It was just possible that they might have a good hand and if I run up against one my friend Schenck would be ruined cashing my losses.

"At the end of an hour I was out twelve hundred dollars; simply anted it away, so to speak, and didn't have a bit of fun. Then, all of a sudden, I got hold of three aces. It happened to be a jack pot, very fat as you may believe, and I had them before the draw. I said to myself that it was now or never, and I run my face for all sorts of raises. Talk about cold feet! When I tell my children about that agonizing ten minutes, I never refer to my feelings, and let them understand that their dad was cool and collected.

"But I wasn't. The Prince and the Duke and that Rothschild let me down rather easy—I suppose they took pity on me, as it was the first hand I had really played—at any rate there was a call, and I won ten thousand dollars on the hand. Then, oh, how I wished that I could get up and make my escape, but that would not have been etiquette, so I stayed on and kept on fooling away my chips as before.

"The end of it was that the game broke up at midnight, and I was as happy as if I had won a prize in a lottery when I found that I was out only three hundred dollars. The experience was worth the money, and I have had lots of fun talking about it, but I wouldn't go through it again until I get to be about ten times a millionaire."

CHAPTER V.

POKER AND JURISPRUDENCE—VARIOUS DECISIONS BY
LEGAL LUMINARIES—HOW THE JUDGE OVER-
RULED THE MOTION—THE SHERIFF
TOOK THE POT.

In the eyes of the law all gambling is illegal and of course poker comes under the ban. Whenever the law gets mixed up with a poker game, the cards have to take a back seat. Yet the law, or the lawyers, who are the life of the law, are currently reported to know a great deal about poker from practical experience. It is supposed that they learn the game when they are young and do not realize how wicked it is. Then, when they advance in years, and have to take big fees from corporations that can do no wrong, they forget all about the days of their youth. This probably accounts for some of the curious decisions we hear from the bench, when poker is in court.

A New York man who kept a cigar store, was hauled up before a magistrate for keeping a gambling den. A detective went into the room back of the store and found five longshoremen playing penny ante.

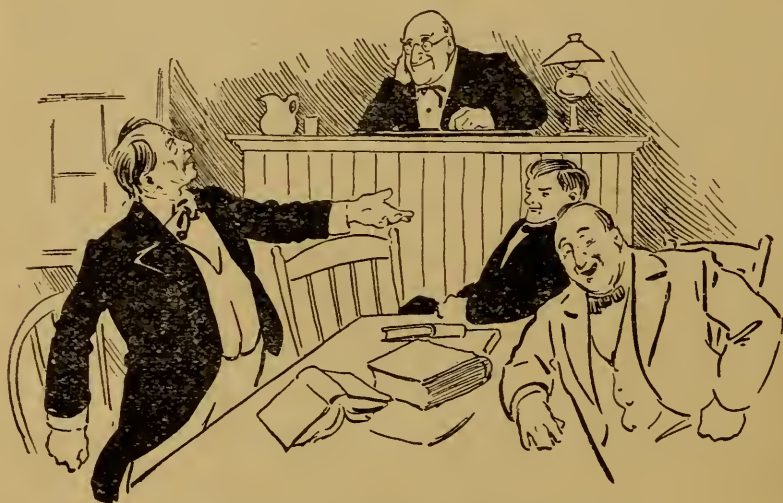
"I have the kitty here as evidence," said the detective.

"What has a cat got to do with the game?" asked the magistrate.

"I said a kitty," replied the detective.

"Well, isn't a kitty a cat? Produce her."

The detective explained what a kitty was, and the magistrate listened with a keen air, as if he was imbibing novel information. Then he demanded to know who owned the kitty, and as the



"Not always," chuckled the judge on the bench.

cigar man said he didn't, and the longshoremen couldn't be found, the case was dismissed and the kitty was confiscated for the good of the poor.

A judge on the district court bench of Minnesota was more frank and also more learned. The business methods of a furniture dealer who made a sky rocket failure were being looked into, and in

the course of the trial it was developed that he had been playing cards rather recklessly, and a story of how he went against a sure thing and lost \$2,500 at one sitting cropped out.

It seems that the furniture man was introduced to a stranger at the Merchants' Hotel in St. Paul, and a game was soon raging. The three men were in it, and the introducer played the double cross on the furniture man. At a certain time he was to drop out and signal what the stranger had.

The furniture man caught a bob tail flush, and his friend signalled that the stranger had only one small pair. Our friend then drew one card and proceeded to bluff. The stranger raised him, and in a short time \$2,500 in bills were piled up. When the show down came our friend had nothing and the stranger scooped in the pot on a pair of jacks.

"By the way," interrupted the creditor's counsel at this point, "which hand wins at poker?"

"The best one, of course," was the disgusted answer.

"Not always," chuckled the judge on the bench, and a prolonged laugh passed around the room.

"You admit, then," continued the lawyer, severely, "that, knowing as you did by your friend's pretty system of private telegraphy, that this stranger had only a small pair that you run up the stakes to \$2,500?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, now wasn't that a very unusual proceeding?"

"Oh, I don't know," broke in the judge, with the air of a man full of information on the subject under discussion, "I suppose the witness argued that having bet on the cards it was his best play to bluff the stranger out, because, you see, he drew only one card while the other man drew two, and had a pair of jacks all the time, don't you perceive? Under such circumstances a play of that kind would win nine times out of ten."

Some of the old lawyers looked reproachfully at the judge for giving the thing away in that fashion, but the youngsters thought it the best joke of the session.

Another learned jurist who could play poker was Judge Walker, of Kentucky, who was very strict on the bench but a jovial companion in private life. It had been the custom of the lawyers traveling the circuit to indulge in a friendly game of poker nearly every night after court adjourned, and Judge Walker occasionally took a hand in the game.

One night in Bracken County the court and the lawyers joined in a friendly game the evening they arrived, and the next morning before court opened, the judge was seen in earnest conversation with the district attorney.

When court opened the judge delivered the usual charge to the Grand Jury, and then added:

"I am informed that of late gambling has been rampant in this county, despite vigorous efforts to suppress it, and it is your duty to bring to justice the occasional as well as the persistent offenders."

Then he turned to the attorneys, and continued:

"Gentlemen, you are officers of the court, and as such are sworn to uphold the laws and constitution of the State. You have been playing poker, contrary to the statutes in such cases made and provided. Each of you will be fined \$10 upon the return of indictments, which I now instruct the jury to bring in."

Turning to the prosecuting attorney, he said:

"You are not only a lawyer, but the prosecuting attorney, sworn to bring offenders to justice. You will pay \$25. Walker," laying his hand on his own breast, "you are not only a lawyer but a judge, and your case is the worst of all. You will pay \$50."

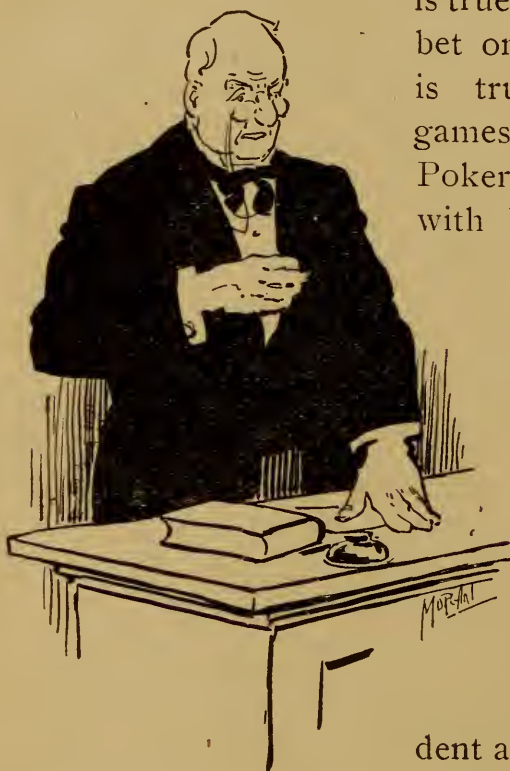
He paid the fine, as did each of the lawyers, and it broke up the game on that circuit.

Chicago has produced an official who would take issue with that Kentucky judge. He isn't a lawyer, but he was a police inspector, and that is the next thing to it. He instructed the police to close all places where stud poker, faro, keno and other gambling might be found, but not to touch the harmless game of draw. In explanation, the inspector said that he regarded draw poker as on

a par with whist, euchre, solitaire and tiddledywinks.

"I regard poker as an innocent game," he said, with a judicial air, "and a harmless diversion. It

is true that money can be bet on it, but the same is true of the other games I have mentioned. Poker should be played with beans or buttons, and I understand that it is quite a favorite with families."



Laying his hand on his own breast—
you will pay \$50.

When asked whether he supposed the club men used beans or buttons, he replied that he regarded the incident as closed.

As it happens, however, this police Solomon has backing in no less a personage than Chief Justice Beatty, of the California Supreme Court, who has decided that in the eyes of the law poker is not a game that comes under the head of gambling.

This decision was the result of an application

for a writ of habeas corpus made by Julius Meyer, who was held to answer on a charge of perjury. He was a juror in a case where the defendant was on trial for robbing the proprietors of a faro bank. Meyer was asked by the counsel for the defendant:

"Do you know a man named Carroll or Ross or Webster, the men who were proprietors of the gambling house at 620 Market street?"

To which he replied: "No, sir, I have nothing to do with such places."

After the trial it was discovered that Meyer was a constant visitor at certain poker establishments, and was occasionally employed to help the game along by taking a hand to revive interest. On this information the district attorney made out a complaint in which he charged Meyer with perjury. In the lower court the ex-juror was found guilty, but Chief Justice Beatty reversed this decision. In his opinion he said:

"Poker playing for money, however objectionable in fact, in the eyes of the law is as innocent as chess or any game played for recreation and its votaries and the places where it is played are not criminal. There is no inconsistency, therefore, between the declaration of the petitioner that he had nothing to do with such places as a faro bank, and the fact he did frequent club-rooms where poker was played for money: And since there is neither

evidence nor accusation of any other false statement made by him it follows that he cannot be held for perjury and must be discharged from custody."

As may be imagined this decision created a sensation, but the justice stuck to it, and the poker players of 'Frisco felt like voting him a set of silver, but didn't dare to.

When Judge Y— was on the northern New York circuit he was noted as a card player, in fact it was a passion with him, and hardly a night passed that he did not set down to a game of some kind. He was not particular, as he played all games equally well, and all in the same calm and judicial style. This fact made him especially strong at poker, but he never took advantage of it to win any special amount of money. It was the game he was after, and as a rule he would call even when he had a strong hand, when he thought the betting showed signs of exceeding reasonable limits.

One night he sat in a game at the Lawyers' Club in Buffalo, where the stakes were never high, and the usual limit was a five-dollar bill. It had been a trying day in court, with a very complicated case. The lawyer for the defense was a little fellow named Perkins, a peppery chap, who made a specialty of badgering witnesses, and making objections to every bit of evidence that did not come his way.

He had had a very unlucky day, as Judge Y— was very clear headed and not inclined to let a lawyer run over him as some judges do. Consequently he sat down on Perkins extremely hard on about twenty different occasions, and overruled all his objections with promptness and dispatch. A lawyer is supposed to take such matters as part of the game, but Perkins was a man who harbored resentment at being shown up.

When the game was made up, the judge sat at the right of Perkins, and the little lawyer gave the big judge a glance that boded him no good. The game had not been in progress ten minutes before it was evident that Perkins was going to make the judge his meat if possible. You may have seen such a game. Perkins wouldn't stay in a hand unless the judge was also in, and he bucked at him without ceasing. Of course the other players noticed it and exchanged significant glances, but the judge appeared to be oblivious.

Time and again Perkins would bet the limit before the draw when it was the judge's age, and when it was his age he was sure to raise the judge out if possible. This was rather a dangerous game against a cool player, and had the judge been vengeful he could have broken the peppery player on several occasions. But he laughed and talked, smoked cigars and took an occasional nip of old rye, and let Perkins get away with his transparent

bluffs with the best of good nature. And, as may be imagined, Perkins kept getting hotter and hotter all the time.

At last it got down to a pot where everybody appeared to have a fair hand, at least everybody stayed. It was lifted several times before the draw. The judge took three cards, the other three men two apiece and Perkins drew one.

It was Perkin's age. The man to his left chipped, the next man raised him one, the next man called, so did the judge, and Perkins raised it the limit. One man dropped out, the other called, and the judge raised Perkins the limit.

"Hello," said that gentleman, with a thinly veiled sneer. "Motion overruled, hey?"

"Looks that way," replied the judge, calmly.

"Then I'll have to take an exception," retorted Perkins. "Raise you five."

The other two players threw up their cards. They saw at once that a fight was on between Perkins and the judge and they didn't want to be pinched. The judge raised back the limit, and thus it sawed back and forth for about ten times, Perkins all the while getting madder and madder, the judge cool as if hearing an action for simple trespass.

By this time there was quite a small army of spectators around the table; the exhibition of rancor was an unusual sight in that club. Some of

them interjected a few jocular remarks with the hope of giving the game a more gentle turn, but by this time Perkins was white to the lips, and one might have thought he was playing for his life.

"Come, come," said the president of the club at length. "We don't want any one to lose a fortune here. In a friendly game, you know"——

"Make a final bet," suggested one of the players.

"I'm agreed," said the judge, promptly. "Or shall we show down as it is?"

"Never!" cried Perkins, excitedly. "I insist on another bet." He threw thirty dollars on the table. "You can't overrule that!"

The judge bit off the end of a fresh cigar with aggravating deliberation, lit it, laid his cards face down, and counted out thirty dollars. "Now, sir,"



Perkins sunk into a heap like a pile of old clothes.

he said, leaning back in his chair in his well known attitude on the bench, "produce your witnesses."

Perkins, shaking like a leaf, but with a triumphant grin on his face, spread out his hand on the table and exhibited four deuces.

"The court," said the judge, sternly, "decides that the witnesses are unworthy of credence."

Then he laid out his cards and disclosed four treys. Perkins sunk into a heap like a pile of old clothes, and actually gasped as he saw the judge gather up the money and chips, and leave the table.

"Damn," he said, faintly. "Overruled again!"

Where the following described game took place deponent sayeth not, and it is not essential, as the only important part of it is the ending. There were four players, but there was nothing out of the ordinary until it came to a jack pot, or rather, this particular jack pot, and only the judge and the colonel were in that.

It had been made for \$25 as a starter, and each of the four players had sweetened it four times with a five-dollar chip, before there came an opener.

The colonel picked up his cards, glanced carelessly at them, smiled blandly, and said, softly: "I'll bust that for fifty, so as to let you all in."

Two of the players thanked him with great cordiality, and stayed out pleasantly. The judge, who was the last to have a say, looked at his cards carefully and an expression of supreme disgust settled

on his face. He held the cards by the corner and made a slight motion as if to throw them in the discard.

The colonel's hand twitched nervously. It looked as if it would be a case of showing openers and raking in the rich stakes and for reasons that will appear later the colonel was reluctant to show his hand at that stage.

The judge made another motion as if he were inclined to throw up his hand and the colonel said: "What are you going to do, judge?"

The judge went through his hand again, with the despairing look intensified.

"Ain't afraid to play, are you?" inquired the colonel, tauntingly.

"A little bit," replied the judge, "but I hate to see you run away with the pot in this fashion. I guess I'll see what you are doing this on, anyhow." Then he made good the opening bet.

They drew cards. The colonel took two and the judge, after much painful deliberation, decided that one was about all he wanted.

The colonel then promptly bet another fifty dollars, and the judge, after thinking it over, saw him and raised five dollars; the colonel came back with another fifty-dollar raise.

The judge laid his hand on the table, pulled out a roll of bills and counted off three hundred dollars.

"I'll tilt that about two hundred and fifty," he remarked, calmly.

The colonel gasped. He looked at his hand and then at the very respectable pile of chips and currency on the board. The judge's face still bore that pained expression. The colonel thought over the proposition for a minute and then went down into his clothes. By hard scrabbling he managed to get two hundred and fifty dollars together, and then he said, rather weakly: "I'll call you."



"Why, you robber," he said, "you had them all the time."

The judge picked up his hand and spread it out on the table. He had four fives.

The colonel gasped worse than ever as he showed up three queens.

"Why, you robber," he said, "you had them all the time."

"Certainly," assented the judge, cheerfully.

"But you made a couple of motions as if you were going to throw up your cards."

"My boy," said the judge, solemnly, as he stowed away the wad of bills, "I think it would be a good thing for you to go to some night school where there is a complete course in that noble game known as draw poker."

But when we get down to what may be called the lower walks of jurisprudence, it is seen that law and poker mix with sometimes curious results. This is illustrated in the trials and adventures of two gentlemen of the East who went South and West to do the country.

In a general way they were on the make, but in this case their specialty was in bunkoing confiding farmers out of farms and crops in various ways not necessary to describe here. In the course of time these two rascals came to Bugg Centre, in Arkansas. One of the gentlemen, on his return to civilization, related the happenings of that small burg in a spirited manner.

"It didn't take us long to get acquainted, and the glad hand was put out everywhere, generally with a jug attached to it. Towards evening of this welcoming day somebody suggested a little game of draw just to pass away the time, and a tall, lanky man said that as it was pretty warm we might as well go to his house and play on the

'piazzer' while his daughter played the 'pianner' inside.

"I wasn't stuck on the piano business, as music always did disconcert me when playing cards, but I couldn't very well make any objection. So we went there, and in about half an hour the music didn't bother me in the least. I don't know who taught those fellows to play cards, but it was the softest proposition I ever encountered.

"Tobe—that was my partner—and I just looked at each other. We didn't have to do any crooked work; the other four fellows just threw their money away, making the biggest fool bets I ever saw. I never found any money in my life, but this was the nearest to it.

"By ten o'clock we had all the money in sight, and Tobe said we'd better be starting out, as it was a long walk home, and the moon would be low down before we could reach the hotel. Our lanky host asked us to stay all night, but we refused. The fact is, we were so well satisfied with the rake-off that we meant to skip early the next morning.

"We started through the woods just loaded down with cash, and pretty near four hundred dollars winner, and we did some pretty joyous talking, when all of a sudden we heard dogs baying behind us. We both knew they were hounds, and Tobe said somebody was coon hunting, although it was rather late in the year for that sport.

"Then he began to tell me about a coon hunt he was once in, and he was getting to the interesting part when he broke off and cried: 'Pard, get a tree! Those dogs are after us.'

"I never was good at tree climbing, but I got up one in a hurry and Tobe took another. In about two minutes the meanest lot of big mouthed, mangy hounds you ever saw were howling and prancing around under us. We both prayed that someone would come, and sure enough someone did. It was the tall, lank man.

He came up and quieted the dogs, and then leaned on a long double-barreled gun, while he delivered a short address.

"He said that he was mighty pained to do what he had to do, but it was his duty. The fact was that Bugg Centre had been victimized several times in the last year by strangers who came into the community and cleaned it out in various ways. He was sorry to have to assert that we had returned the hospitality extended to us in a cruel way.

"We had gone into a friendly game with the Mayor, the Marshal, the County Treasurer and the Sheriff, which latter was himself. In a moment of confidence the Treasurer had staked the other gentlemen with all the available county funds, and we had skillfully—he would not say dishonestly—won them all. After our departure the little band of officials talked over the matter and came to the

conclusion that it was the duty of the Sheriff to make amends for this error, and here he was.

"He informed us that he construed his duty to be to make us shell out all our winnings, and, as his fee, any other small change that we might have about us. He added that the dogs were not hungry, but would get so after awhile, and when we came down they might appease their appetite on us. Furthermore, there were some citizens of Bugg Centre back in the woods, who could pick a coon out of the highest tree in the darkest night in the year.

"Did we come down? What else could we do? We did. We threw the money we had down on the ground, the Sheriff gathered it up, whistled to his dogs and went off. Tobe and I slid down, shook hands with each other mournfully, and in twenty-four hours we were out of Arkansas. I'll never go there any more, either on business or pleasure. Honor? They don't know the meaning of the word."

CHAPTER VI.

ALL ABOUT JACK POTS—A \$1,200,000 JACK—DIDN'T
KNOW GREENBACKS—WON ON TWO DEUCES—
A BOSTON MAN'S NARROW ESCAPE.

"Jack pots," said a veteran campaigner, "is the devil."

The grammar is bad, the sentiment will be recognized as irreproachable. The inventor of jack pots is unknown, but his name has been alternately praised and cursed by players for ages. Southerners have declared that more than a million niggers have been lost on bob tailed flushes, but that isn't a circumstance to the money lost on jack pots. Of course somebody won the money, but the winner is not entitled to any consideration in a poker game; he can take care of himself.

A jack pot is a delusion and a snare. When a fellow is behind the game a jack pot offers a tempting chance to play even on one hand. Of five players it has been calculated that an average of three will stay in a jack pot, and it usually has been sweetened three or four times before the opening. That makes a pot worth playing for.

Now suppose you pick up a pair of jacks. Some players will pass on jacks and not come in unless another player opens the pot. Most players come

in on jacks. Now comes the question how to play it. If you are the last to say, you may be pretty certain that you have the best hand to go, but if you open it lightly all hands will stay, and some one with a measley pair of fours will draw out on you. Therefore it is good play to open the pot for the limit, and thus scare away the little fellows if you can. But if they stay and you do not better your hand, you may be certain that you are beaten, and your only chance to win is to make a big bluff. If you help your hand, even with a small pair, you have a right to think that you have a winner.

On the other hand, if you start out with threes or better, it is good play to open the pot for a small sum, so as to let in the other players. Then there is a chance that some one with a pair of queens or better will draw another and beat you, but it won't do to think of that, or you can't play cards.

The most aggravating hand to have on opening is two pairs. It is much easier to draw one more to a pair than it is to make a full hand out of two pairs, yet they have such a ponderous look that you can't help playing them after the draw. The safest policy is to call the first chance if you are raised.

The real agony, however, comes to the man with a small pair who sees the opener, catches his card and then has it beaten by the opener, who also catches his card. Of course, arguing from the

ethical side, he ought to be beaten; the opener having the best hand at the start ought to win out; but that reasoning will not pacify the loser.

One of the problems of the jack pot is in relation to splitting openers. Suppose you open on jacks and all the others come in cheerfully, and you realize that you are up against threes and at the same time discover that you have a four flush. Then it is your play to split your jacks and draw to the flush. But at the end of the hand you must show your pair, so you place one jack on the table in front of you under a stack of chips and let it lay there until it is time to show up. That is fair enough and plain enough, but it in a measure gives away your hand.

The New York Sun comes to the rescue in its own original way. The question is frequently referred to its card expert, and he always decides it in the same way. This is the way he talks:

"A player may open a jack pot on a pair and split the pair to draw to a straight or flush without in any manner calling the attention of any other player to the play. The discards must be placed in a pile in front of the next dealer, and the players must discard in order, beginning with the age. Then the discard pile gives indisputable evidence of what each player discards."

How deliciously simple that is! The players must discard in order! This is a theory, not a con-

dition. The Sun man apparently thinks that poker players are like soldiers at roll call each one answering to his name as called and no one daring to speak out of turn. As a matter of poker fact, no one ever saw a game where the players discarded in regular order. Some men are always slow in making up their minds, and the last man is just as liable to pitch away his discard first, so that the discard is never a reliable guide as to the order in which the cards were dropped. Then again, while two or three men are betting one of the others is almost certain to pick up the remaining cards and shuffle them or to mix them up in the fashion some players have of "seeing what they would have got."

In ideal poker every move is made according to Hoyle—or the Sun—but poker isn't ideal. Men will not discard in regular order and there is no "must" about it. There is no umpire to direct the play or call down the player who discards out of his turn. The Sun man has frequently announced that he is his own authority and it looks as if he were his own poker player; he plays cards with himself, where everything moves according to his rules. Nobody else plays that way. In splitting openers, anchor down the splitter in front of you, and then there can be no dispute.

Another point while we are about it, which applies to all kinds of hands. It is a rule in poker

playing that if the card is faced before the draw, the player must take it; if it faced while drawing, the player can't take it. But, what then? Does he get the next card, or must he wait until the others are served? There are two opinions. One says that he ought to get the next card because it wasn't his fault that the card was faced. The other says that if an extra card is served that deprives all the players that follow of the cards they ought to have had, and that so long as he has to take a card to which he was not originally entitled, what difference does it make if he has to wait until all the others are served? This side seems to have rather the best of the argument, and it is the view taken by most poker coteries.

Speaking of innovations on jack pots—progressing up to aces and then down again—another one comes to light, but it is not dangerous. It appears to have been evolved from the active brain of a St. Louis sport. He says:

“Of late years the old-fashioned ante-bellum game of poker has been superseded by the plan of playing all jack pots. This, of course, made swifter play, while at the same time it enabled everybody to gauge to some extent the strength of the hand held by the man who opened the pot. But the latest evolution of poker is now at hand, and it consists of allowing pots to be opened on any pair.

"That is to say, if A has only a pair of deuces and is willing to take chances he can begin the betting. Of course, if he is very close to the dealer he will pass on such a small pair, and will hold his hand to await the action of B, C, D, et al.

"The advantages of this plan may not seem obvious, but I have yet to see the poker player who does not consider it a big improvement on the cast iron system of adhesion to jacks. In the first place, it gives more rapidity and excitement, and that is what the player yearns for. In the next place, it gives the loser a far better chance to get even. Everybody will be coming in on short pairs—tens and under—and the chances of making strong hands are increased because of the increased frequency of the draw.

"This open-on-any-pair game is, I think, quite likely to gain the favor of the pasteboard loving public, and crystallize into permanent form. The conservative element will kick against it, but will finally give way, just as it had to concede the all-jack system, which was for a long time fought bitterly by the ancient regime."

Now doesn't that sound funny. To open a pot on any pair is precisely what is done now in straight poker, and the only thing he bars out is the opening of the pot on nothing, and how often does that occur in a game? Of course there would be more pots played, but, what size would they be?

It would be a miracle if everyone would pass out if two deuces were openers. There would be a play on every deal. The whole scheme is rubbish.

General Miles once told a good story about the biggest jack pot on record. He prefaced it by two astonishing statements—the first that he did not play poker himself, and the second that the game has rather gone out of the army. No one would think of contradicting the gallant general in command of our armies, but, at the same time—well, here is the story:

“I think I can claim to have been a witness of the biggest game as to stakes that was ever played.”

“Tell us about it, General,” said Colonel Ochiltree. “I have some pretty good poker stories in stock myself.”

“And so have I,” said Henry Watterson. “For instance, Joe Blackburn’s about the game played in the trenches at the battle of Shiloh, with a table made on the bodies of the comrades of the players.”

“Well,” chimed in John W. Mackay, “as to stakes, I will enter a claim for some of the games played in the good old days of Nevada, when the boys had the Comstock lode to draw upon. But, General, let us have your story.”

“It was in the spring of 1865,” began the General, “when Davis, Lee and the rest of you Confed-

erates, Watterson, were in full retreat from Richmond toward Danville, and we were pressing you night and day, hardly stopping to eat or sleep. On the eve of the battle of Sailor's Creek"——

"I was there," chipped in Ochiltree. "It was in that battle I was wounded."

"That day," continued General Miles, "we over-



The biggest poker game that was ever played.

hauled and captured a Confederate wagon train and found, greatly to the delight of our boys, that several of the wagons were loaded with Confederate bonds and Confederate money in transit from Richmond to whatever place the government now on wheels might make a stand. The soldiers

simply helped themselves to the stuff by the handfuls, and the officers, who had a pretty good idea as to the value of the spoils, or rather, their lack of value, did not care to deprive them of their fun.

"At night, when we had knocked off work for supper and a few hours rest and sleep, I had occasion to ride along the line, and I found a poker game going on at every camp fire. Stopping to watch one of the games, this is what I heard:

" 'How much is the ante?'

" 'A thousand dollars.'

" 'And how much has it been raised? Five thousand? Well, here goes! I raise it ten thousand.'

" 'Good! I see you and go you ten thousand dollars better. Twenty-five thousand to draw cards.'

"Then cards were drawn, and presently a bet was made of fifty thousand dollars. Some one went one hundred thousand better, but he was ruled down. Fifty thousand was the limit. However, there was five hundred thousand dollars in the pot when it was hauled in by the winner, who had three treys and a pair of kings. I expressed my surprise at the size of the game and told the boys that they had better go slow or their funds would run out.

" 'Never fear, General,' replied one of them,

'we'll keep within our means. You ought to have been here ten minutes ago. We had a jack pot of one million, two hundred thousand dollars!'

"I think you will agree with me," concluded General Miles, "that no bigger poker game than that was ever played."

A sergeant in the Seventh Cavalry, then stationed in Dakota, told me a story that is a mate



He made them shell out all the notes they had stuffed in their clothes.

to this. It was at the very beginning of the war and his regiment was in Virginia. He had a squad out on a scouting expedition, and they saw ahead of them a small party of Confederates with a wagon. They gave chase and the Confederates got away and left the wagon.

The sergeant and his men examined the wagon and found that it was a U. S. wagon, probably cut out from a train by a daring party of Confederates.

It contained twenty boxes, which they pried open. The boxes were full of greenbacks, all brand new.

Not a man in the party had ever seen a greenback and had no idea that they were good money, so they grabbed them out by fistfuls, and set down to play poker with them. In this occupation they were discovered by another squad of Union troops, this time headed by a captain, who knew something about finance. He made them shell out all the notes they had stuffed in their clothes, and the wagon was taken back to camp and a frantic paymaster.

My friend used to tell this story with tears in his eyes. If they had only known the value of their capture they might have taken a couple hundred thousand apiece, hid it in their clothes, threw away some empty boxes, and brought the rest virtuously back to camp, and been rich for the rest of their days. It is rather a curious story, and I don't vouch for it.

It seems that poker is played in rather peculiar fashion in the upper circles of New York, if the following little tale is true. It was a choice coterie on the top floor of a fashionable Gotham club house.

The jack pot had been around several times, and there was an accumulation of dollars in the centre of the table.

The dealer picked up the cards and threw them

out one by one, after the manner of poker games, and the gentleman on his left discovered that the first three were deuces. He immediately opened the pot for fifty cents, which was the terrible limit, and was rather startled when it came to him again to note that it cost him two dollars more to get in. He paid the price, but such was his agitation that he forgot he had three of a kind, discarded and drew three.

Before picking up his cards he realized that he had made a bull. Believing that he had lost all chance of winning the pot, he was about to throw

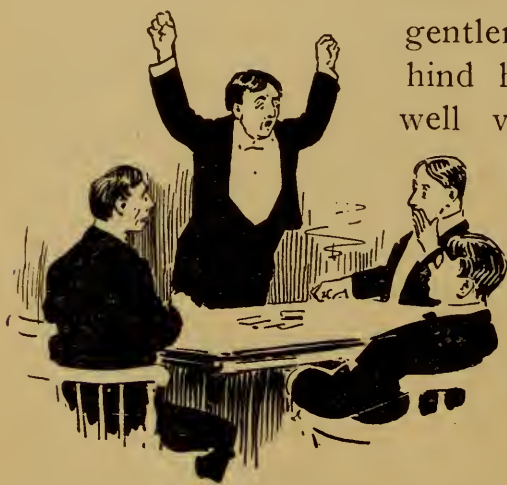
down his hand when a gentleman who sat behind him, and was not well versed in the national game, remarked, blandly:

"See here, old man, you have four cards just alike. Is that right?"

"Shut up!" growled the club man. Then, with

seeming indifference, he added: "Fifty up."

Everybody laughed and stayed out—naturally. Nobody cared to dispute the pot with him, and he raked it in.



The dealer leaped to his feet and shouted: "I thought you had four of a kind; where are they?"

The occasion being rather phenomenal, he threw down his cards face up, and he still had two deuces.

The dealer leaped to his feet and shouted: "I thought you had four of a kind. Where are they?"

"Four spades and a deuce of hearts," replied the winner.

There was another laugh all around and the game went on, and it was not until the next time they met that somebody thought to ask how he opened the pot.

He was fortunate that he was not playing in a cowboy game. In fashionable circles the man who opens a jack pot when he hasn't openers loses the pot; in other circles he loses his life along with the pot. There are certain men who will not accept such excuses as "Forgot," "Thought that jack was a king," or something like that. They see nothing in it but a deliberate attempt to steal a pot, and guns are pulled instant.

In the early 'eighties, when Texas was really tough, and a man's life was not worth much more than a mule's, a young Bostonian, just from college, landed in the Lone Star State. He had three thousand dollars, a good education and all the astounding conceit that goes with a college education. He was way up in the classics, had a smattering of the modern languages, thought he knew "life" in all its phases—having imbibed the idea from three months' experience in the streets of

Boston and New York—and had more than a notion that he could go West and carve out his fortune as easily as drinking a beer.

The first place he struck was Dallas, and he dropped a few hundreds there just for a starter. The further he moved west the easier he became, and when he got to the limits, he had only about five hundred of his original three thousand. He was a gay boy, and rapidly fell into Texan ways, but somehow he couldn't catch on. An occasional spurt at cow punching kept his head above water for a time, but he realized that the day was rapidly approaching when he would have to return to Boston with the sad confession that he had dropped his pile, and would be obliged to run up against the stern realities of life in the guise of a teacher of a country school.

It was gall and wormwood to him and he used every effort to stave off the evil day. Among the efforts was bucking the tiger, but the beast was unkind. He see-sawed back and forth, but he could never make a real killing, and it was while in this precarious state of affairs that he sat in a game of poker.

The fates looked rather propitious. The four other men in the game were cattlemen with big wads and a generous style of betting. They were also square as a die. Horace—we will call him Horace, as befits a Boston man—knew that he

was the best player in the bunch, and if the cards went his way he had more than a chance of fattening his wad.

And the cards did run his way. It was a rare thing that he did not start out with a pair and he helped his hand about four times out of five. Three times he held a full house, and he got so that he was almost afraid to play flushes he held so many. He really did not dare to play to the full strength of his hands, for fear of exciting suspicion, although he was playing without a thought of trickery. Once or twice he apologized for his luck, but the other men laughed good naturedly.

L. of C. "Play your luck, my boy," said one of them. "I understand that you haven't had your share since striking this country."

This was true enough, and so he played a little harder, until at the end of three hours he was nearly four thousand dollars ahead of the game.

Then there came a jack pot. There had been jack pots before, but nothing out of the way. It was the Boston man's deal, and when he picked up his cards he saw that he had a pair of kings, a jack, a four and a five. There was twenty-five dollars in the pot to start off. Everybody passed and it was up to Horace. He opened it for twenty-five. Two men stayed, the other two dropped out.

The first man to draw took one card, the next man drew three and Horace took three. He laid

his pair of kings face down in front of him, tossed the discard into the deck, and bet fifty dollars without looking at his draw. The man that drew one card raised it a hundred, the next man dropped out, and Horace stopped to think.

A one card evidently meant a four flush or a four straight. If he had caught either Horace was beaten, even if he caught the third king; if it was a bluff two kings were good as wheat. He looked at his draw. A ten spot, a six and a deuce. So he still had his pair of kings. He tossed in another hundred. The cattleman came back at him with two hundred and fifty. Then Horace picked up the cards lying in front of him, more with a desire to have time to think than any other motive.

Then he felt a cold chill stealing up his spine until his hair crept on his head, and a sickness came all over him. He had kept the jack and thrown away one of the kings! He sat there a full minute and did some very rapid thinking. If it had been an ordinary deal he would have thrown his hand into the deck without comment, but it was a jack pot, and he had opened it, so that he must show his hand.

He said afterward that what he should have done was to have thrown down his hand, explain how he had made a mistake, and forfeit the pot. He thinks they would have accepted the explanation in good faith, although he admits that they

might not. But all he realized then was that he was in a terrible predicament. To open a jack pot without openers was generally regarded as an attempt to steal the pot, and treated as detected theft usually is in Texas. Here he had been winning right along, and holding phenomenal hands, and he couldn't help but feel that under the same circumstances he would have had suspicions. He saw himself in imagination shot full of holes, or maybe with a dirk thrust into his vitals, and the folks at home never knowing what had become of him.

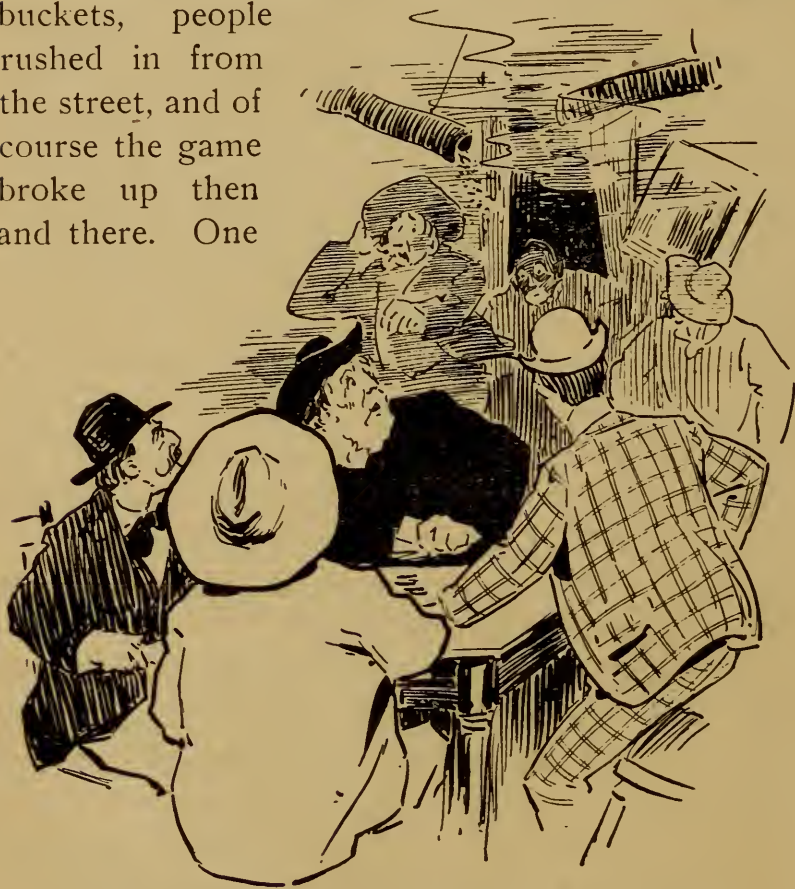
While all these gloomy thoughts were running through his head, he mechanically raised another hundred, which was the worst thing he could have done, because while he had an excuse before lifting his cards now he had none. He realized that also when it was too late, and another cold chill went capering along his spinal column.

The cattleman fingered his cards, and Horace saw that it was either a call or a lay down, and then would come the show down of openers, and then——

Just then there broke out a terrific commotion in the rear of the saloon, which was also an eating house. The cook had upset a pan of gravy over his legs, and in his jumping around had upset the stove, and the kitchen was on fire. As the whole structure was of wood and the fire department any-

thing but prompt or reliable, there was a strong probability of what the reporters call a holocaust.

The cook and his assistant, two men who were eating, the barkeeper and the boss tore around with buckets, people rushed in from the street, and of course the game broke up then and there. One



Just then there broke out a terrific commotion in the rear of the saloon.

of the cattlemen swept cards, chips and money into his hat and all five players lit out. Horace said that when he dropped his cards on the floor he felt as if he was getting rid of a thousand pound weight.

When the excitement had subsided, and the fire was extinguished with small loss, all hands went back to the saloon to take a drink. Then the cattleman took off his hat and emptied the contents on the bar.

"What's to become of this?" he asked.

"I'm willing to divide it," said the Boston man, promptly.

"If you had the best hand it's yours," returned the cattleman. "What did you have?"

"I had only a pair of kings," replied Horace, looking him squarely in the eyes. That was no lie, because he did have a pair of kings, although he was fool enough to throw one away.

"I had a four flush to go," said the other man, "and I didn't fill, but I made a pair of queens. The pot's yours."

Horace felt another great weight lifted off his mind when he realized that he really had had the winning hand, and yet he felt ashamed to be the recipient of such generous dealing. But the four cattlemen were game, and he had to take the pile. He made a mental resolve to set in with them again, and lose it all back to them, but they left the next morning and so he had to go back to Boston with five thousand dollars to the good.

CHAPTER VII.

THE SCHEME FOR A NATIONAL JACK POT—A JACK POT WITHOUT CARDS.

The jack pot is so infernally fascinating that it has a tendency to turn the brain of its votaries. It is only on this hypothesis that we can explain the wild schemes which originate on this basis. One would think that enough money has been lost on the pot without devising any plan to swell it to mammoth proportions. Such is the scheme of the National Jack Pot, which is credited to a New York enthusiast.

The basic idea is to have a prearranged series of poker games played throughout the country by parties of local card shufflers. Take Chicago, for instance. On a certain evening six of the best poker players in town will set down to a game. Each man has \$2 in the pot, and it takes \$5 to come in.

There being \$12 in the pot to start with, it follows that if only four men come in there would be \$32 to win at the very lowest. But, of course, there would be a bet or two, so that the pot might be twice that sum; but, as they say in faro, let her go as she lays.

Now, under the terms of the compact, all over

the Union, from the sterile shore of Maine to the sunny slope of California, poker players will be stacking up on this same proposition. Now comes the beginning of the novel part of the performance. The winner of each pot does not pocket his earnings. The \$32 in every case is reserved for a grand fund to be made up by the—let us say—hundred games played on this system. That would make \$3,200 in all.

The winning hundred would next meet in convention and arrange for a new set of winners. Twenty games of five players each would be organized. Each man must put up \$2 as before, with \$5 to open. The limit, it should be noticed, is \$5 all through this series of games.

Here we would have twenty jack pots, with \$10 in each. Let us suppose that three men will stay in each pot when it is opened; that would give twenty \$25 pots, which makes \$500 more to add to the original sum of \$3,200.

The twenty men who come out of this second ordeal as winners now form another series of five games with four players each. Of course there would be an adjournment between each series to settle any little differences of opinion, and determine the choice of a referee, whose decision in all cases would be final. When the twenty survivors come together for their five games under the same terms that have previously prevailed, it follows that

\$2 for each man and \$5 to open would mean \$28 at least for the pot at each table. Five times \$28 gives \$140 to swell the sum already in hand.

Now comes the final bout. The five veterans who thus come out of the various ordeals sit down together to a thrilling final game. The pot would be \$3,200 plus \$500 plus \$140, or \$3,840. It would still be a jack with \$2 apiece to come in, or \$3,850 in all. The limit is still \$5. The winner of this final pot takes all the money.

Now, what do you think of that, outside of a lunatic asylum? The man out of whose brilliant brain emanated this piece of nonsense, pretends that everybody he met enthusiastically endorsed it. Alas, alas! There is one thing he forgot in the scheme. He hasn't allowed for any betting after the draw. It appears to be a show down affair all the way through. Wouldn't that make a real exciting game?

The impression that the man doesn't know what he is talking about is deepened by his reference to Bret Harte. "Without poker," he observes, sapiently, "we would have had no Bret Harte. It was poker that inspired those immortal lines, beginning:

'Which they had a small game
And Ah Sin took a hand.' "

Oh, no; my son. It wasn't poker at all. It was euchre, as you will see if you consult the poem and do not depend on your memory.

However, the idea is original if it is foolish, and we will give him credit for that.

As a genuine novelty a jack pot without cards is entitled to pre-eminence. It was played in the glorious climate of California, and a man on the Argonaut was one of the party.

There were six all together, five men coming into the mountains to have a fishing spree, and the sixth man was Long Tom, the guide.

"Jest you all go over into the cabin there and make yourselves comfortable, while I tend to gettin' this stuff unpacked," said Long Tom. "There ain't no one thare; my pardner he's down below."

The cabin had two rooms and the one they entered was the kitchen. There was not much furniture—a table of hewn logs, a chair of bent saplings and a rough bench. However, they did not notice such furniture as there was, for each member of the party, as he stepped over the threshold had his attention instantly attracted by the stove, and a chorus of ejaculations went up from the group.

"Well, that staggers me," said the stock broker.

"H'm," said the professor in a mysterious tone, while he rubbed his chin.

The stove was a plain, small affair, rather old and rusty, and the only strange thing about it was its position. Its abbreviated legs stood upon large cedar posts, which were planted in the floor and

were four feet in height. This brought the stove away up in mid air, so that the top was about on a level with the colonel's neck, and he was a six-footer.

The five men formed a circle around the stove and stared at it as solemnly as if it were a coffin. They felt the posts, and found them firm and solid, showing that the arrangement was a permanent one. Then they all took a look at the hole in the roof through which the stove pipe vanished.

Suddenly the stock broker burst into a loud laugh.

"Oh, I understand it now," he said.

"Understand what?" demanded the colonel, sharply.

"Why Long Tom has his stove hoisted up so high from the floor."

"So do I," said the doctor, "but I suspect that my explanation is not the same as any one else would offer."

"Well, I will bet that I am right," returned the stock broker, "and put up the money."

"I am in this," said the judge. "I have a clear idea about that stove, and I will back it up."

"Make it a jack pot," suggested the colonel. "I want to take a hand."

The stock broker drew a five dollar gold piece from his pocket and dropped it on the center of the table.

"He has the stove up there," he said, "to get a better draught. In this rarified mountain air there is only a small amount of oxygen to the cubic inch, and combustion is more difficult to secure than in the lower latitudes. I have heard that if you get high enough up you can't cook an egg—that is, I mean, water won't boil—or something like that," he continued, thrown into sudden confusion by the discovery that the professor's eye was fixed upon him with a sarcastic gaze.

"Is that supposed to be science?" asked the professor, mildly.

"Well," said the stock broker, doggedly, "never mind the reasons. Experience is probably good enough for Tom. He finds that he gets a better draught for his stove by having it in mid-air, so he has it there."

"The right explanation," began the professor, "is the simplest. My idea is that"—

"Excuse me," interrupted the stock broker, tapping the table, "are you in this pot?"

The professor made a deposit, and proceeded:

"Have you noticed that our guide is a very tall man? Like most men of his height he hates to bend over. If the stove was near the floor he would have to stoop down low when he whirled a flap jack or speared a rasher of bacon. Now he can stand up and do it with ease. Your draught theory is no good; the longer the pipe, if straight, the better the fire will burn."

"Professor," remarked the colonel, with a cruel smile, "I regret to have to tell you that your money is gone. Long Tom told me on the way up, that his partner did all the cooking, and he is a man of rather short stature." The colonel then paid his compliments to the jack pot, and continued. "Now, my idea is that the stove heats the room there better than on the floor. It is only a cooking stove, to be sure, but when the winter is cold it makes the room comfortable. Being up in the middle of the space it heats all equally well, which it would not do if it were down below."

The doctor greeted this theory with a laugh.

"Colonel," he said, "you are wild—away off the mark. Hot air rises, as any school boy ought to know, and the best way to disseminate it is to have the stove as low as possible. According to your theory it would be a good plan to put the furnace in the attic of a house instead of the basement."

"I think," remarked the colonel, "that I could appreciate your argument better if you would ante."

"Cheerfully, because the pot is mine," said the doctor, as he deposited the coin. "You will adopt my idea the minute you hear it, and Long Tom, who will be here in a minute, will bear me out. This room is very small; it has but little floor space and none of it goes to waste. Now if he had put the stove down where we expected to find it Long

Tom could not have made use of the area underneath, as you see he has done. On all sides of the supporting posts you will notice there are hooks on which he hangs his pans and skillets. Under-



'I see you air all admirin' my stove, Captain.'

neath there is a practical kitchen closet for pots and cooking utensils of various kinds. What could be more convenient? I am surprised that none of you have seen what is so apparent."

The judge, who had been listening to the opinions offered by the others, with the same grim smile that occasionally ornamented his face when he announced that an objection was overruled, now stepped forward and dropped a coin on the table. He then rendered his decision as follows:

"It appears that none of you have noticed the forest of hooks in the roof just over the stove. They are not in use at present, but they are there for some purpose. I imagine that during the winter pieces of venison and bear's meat dangle over the stove and are thus dried for later consumption. Now, if the stove was on the floor it would be too far away from the roof to be used for that purpose."

"Here comes Long Tom," shouted the colonel, who had stepped to the open door while the judge was speaking.

The old trapper put down the various articles of baggage with which his arms were loaded, and came into the kitchen cabin where his guests stood. He glanced at the group and then at the stilted stove.

"I see you air all admirin' my stove," said he, "an' I'll bet you've been wonderin' why it's up so high."

"Yes, we have," admitted the professor. "How did you know it?"

"People most allus jest as soon as they come into the place begin to ask me about it. That's how I knowed."

"Well, why is it up so high?" asked the stock broker, impatiently, with a side glance at the well developed jack pot on the table.

As the novelists say, the interest was intense as Long Tom grinned until he showed his palate, and prepared to elucidate the mystery.

"The reason," said he, "is simple enough. You see we had to pack all this stuff up here from down below on burros. Originally there was four j'int's of pipe but the cinch wasn't drawed tight enough on that burro that was carryin' them, an' two of 'em slipped out an' rolled down the mountain. When we got here an' found that there wasn't but two pieces left I reckoned I would have to kinder h'ist the stove up to make it fit the pipe. So I jest h'isted her, an' there she is yet. Say, what's all this money on the table for?"

There was a deep silence, while all the learned men looked at each other, and it lasted so long that the guide ventured to repeat the question.

"It is a jack pot," said the doctor, sadly, "and as near as I can make out it belongs to you."

CHAPTER VIII.

WOMEN AND POKER—ARGUMENTS TO SHOW THAT THEY CAN'T PLAY AND A STORY TO PROVE THAT THEY CAN.

Can women play poker?

Ought women to play poker?

These are two distinct questions and must be decided on their separate merits.

Take the last question first. Ought women to play poker? Of course. Why not? Don't they do every thing else that men do? They have even had a try at base ball. Women would resent with indignation the idea that they should be debarred from cards, and when you once start who is going to draw the line? The point that poker is a gambling game is no point at all, because a bet can be made on any game, even mumble peg. Society is always erecting imaginary barriers between men and women and they are always being overturned.

Women have been insisting strenuously for the last twenty years at least that they have just as many rights as men, and the men have finally admitted that the point is well taken. Of course, this has its serious side, as in the case of the lady who was standing up in the street car. A man asked her if she was a "woman righter," and when she

admitted that she was, he told her to stand up and enjoy her rights like a man.

So if a woman wants to play poker she should not be hindered, but it must be understood that she has no better right to the top hand than her man opponent. Cards are not at all gallant, and they will not run her way just because the fingers that hold them are fair and feminine.

But now, can a woman play poker? Physically, of course; but I mean play the game as it should be played? No, she cannot. And yet they say poker is like a woman. Uncertain, hard to understand, fascinating, and has to be approached in a different way about every time you meet her. Then again, it is only the young and inexperienced that know all about women, and it is only the fresh young amateur that knows all about poker. Old bachelors and married men confess that all they know about poker is that they ought to stay out of the game, and can't. Same way about women. These old and experienced chaps lose confidence in their knowledge of women the more they meet them.

I do not contend that no woman can play poker; there are exceptions to every rule, and as we shall see further along, there are women poker players; I am talking about women in general. There are a great many reasons why a woman cannot play poker.

She is too nervous, and hasn't the physical strength. It is all very well to play from eight to ten in a parlor, with buttons for chips and where the winners give back the money at the end of the game. And it is easy enough to take a hand with a party of gentlemen visiting your husband, where the hands are played to the accompaniment of laughter and jokes, and all the men are deferential, and call just to see what you are doing it on, or let you get away with a transparent bluff, or play with six cards, because they take pleasure in seeing how you enjoy the game.

But that isn't poker. The late Richard Proctor used to call the usual game of whist "bumble-puppy" to distinguish it from the real game as played by experts, and parlor poker is entitled to an equally derisive name. There isn't one woman in a hundred thousand who could sit down at a poker table at eight in the evening and play until daylight broke in the East. She would faint or have hysterics, and would certainly have to call in the doctor next day. When I mentioned this point to a charming woman the other day she replied that when women played the gentlemen would make special rules for their benefit.

That illustrates from what standpoint a woman views the game of poker. She would exact deference and indulgence; she would regard it as a personal insult if she were reproached for being

slow or making a misdeal, or committing any one of the little lapses of which the best of players are guilty.

Women cannot play poker because they are very poor losers. Some men are in the same boat, but they have the grace to hide it as best they can, but women are not ashamed to get angry and make an exhibition of their distress. It is impossible to imagine a woman losing a thousand dollars and meeting the winner next week with a smooth countenance. A woman would take it as a personal insult to be called down on a bluff.

No man could play with a woman and be free to play his hand for all it was worth. He would always be handicapped with the thought that she was one of the weaker sex. Can you imagine, for instance, a man who was sweet on a girl, beating a flush that she held? If he did it would be good-by to his prospects.

Then again, a woman is a born cheat. No one who has ever watched a woman play cards will dispute that assertion. In euchre she will renege, and in every game she will hold out cards, and violate all the rules of the game, trusting to her sex to be excused. Her pretty manners and her flirtatious ways are supposed to be an excuse for her cheating, but they would get very tiresome in a game for keeps. In a board game like faro or roulette a woman is playing against a machine, and she

has no particular adversary, which accounts for the fact that women gamble at Monte Carlo and make no particular scene when they lose, but poker is a game where personalities count.

I have been told that women make good poker players because they have an instinct that men have not. Excuse me if I say "Bosh." Instinct doesn't amount to a row of beans in poker. If women could read faces as claimed and judge from them what the men really think there wouldn't be so many unhappy marriages in the world. A man who sat down to beat a woman in a poker game, and cast all sentiment aside, could break her if she were a millionaire. All such stories emanate from sappy youths who have been playing with the girl of their choice, or married men who play in the parlor with beans. Here is a sample of the way a newspaper man writes when he is short of copy, and wants to square himself with the fair sex.

"Women are the best poker players, barring Chinamen. Take a sharp, shrewd, beautiful woman. She can beat a man every time after she has learned the rudiments of the game. Ladies have been made natural poker players. They are so coy and designing, and dissimulation with them is not an acquired art. It is their second nature. Deception is so easy for them that they easily outwit men. They size up men more quickly than we can fathom their thoughts.

"Have you ever heard a lady exclaim: 'Oh, how glad I am to see you; perfectly charmed, don't you know!'" Then you wander away to a secluded spot and wonder if she was bluffing. Well, you encounter the same proposition with women in a poker game, only you haven't got time to take a secluded walk by yourself and meditate and determine whether she is bluffing or not, when she says with a bewitching, coaxing little smile, arching her eyebrows, and glancing innocently at you out of the corner of her eye, 'I think my hand is worth \$1,500 more.'

"Ever been there? No? Well, I've been in a good many tight places, where I had to think quickly, but I am free to confess that the woman was too much for me."

The man that wrote that never played more than five cent ante in his life. The idea of a woman raising \$1,500 with a roguish twinkle in her eye!

A story from Bar Harbor lets a little light in on the way women play poker. It was some years ago when poker was taken up as a fad, as automobil-ing is now, and as women take up anything. A party of women were initiated into the mysteries of penny ante, and pretty soon the bridle was loosened and they were playing with white chips at fifty cents and the limit taken off.

It went on this way for about three weeks, they meeting every night, betting and bluffing in their

"bewitching" way, and thinking they were having a terribly wicked time.

Of course there was a tremendous amount of cheating, and as there happened to be one woman in the party who didn't cheat, she was soon broke, and also in the soup to the amount of \$300 in the way of I O U's. She thought she saw her way out of the dilemma, and resorted to a genuine feminine trick. She ordered four fine gowns from her dressmaker, and the bill, amounting to \$300 was sent home. The husband handed the amount to his wife.

She didn't do a thing with it but take it to the poker table, pay off \$200 of her debt, and with the balance try to win back what she had lost. You can imagine what happened. She lost her hundred, and had to give some more I O U's. Then she put off the dressmaker until the latter got tired and sent the bill to her husband. Then there was a scene. She confessed all, gave all the names of the poker players and the indignant husband wrote to each one of them demanding the immediate return of the money won from his wife. Then there was hysterics all around, the money was returned, the circle broke up in admired disorder, mutual recriminations were the order of the day, and every sweet player vowed that she would never speak to any of the others.

Just try to imagine any such scene occurring among men!

And now, having demonstrated that a woman cannot play poker it is no more than right to tell a story about a woman who could and did play poker. But it will be noticed that we have to go back about fifty years for an example, and then there is something supernatural in it.

In the suburbs of Trenton, New Jersey, there is an old landmark known as the Mills Tavern. This tavern was also a toll house, and was kept for more than fifty years by a woman called Martha Mills, who by her commission on the tolls she collected and the profits on the tavern made quite a small fortune.

To these savings she added some thousands of dollars made in her dealings with politicians who came to the tavern to lay plans and pull wires for the passage of certain laws through the legislature. As Martha had a keen eye for business she made these men pay special prices, and her terms were always cash. She had discovered that a politician was apt to be here to-day and gone to-morrow, so to speak. Indeed, she was wont to boast that she had very small confidence in human nature, especially of the male persuasion, and her favorite remark was that she wouldn't trust a man as far as she could throw a church by the steeple.

Among her other accomplishments Martha was an expert poker player, and coupled with her knowledge of the game had an uncanny accom-

paniment that made her a dangerous antagonist. She would never take a hand unless there were seven players, and she had an abiding faith in the



"I'm the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter," said Martha.

number seven.

She explained that peculiarity by saying that she was the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter and thus had reason to believe in the number seven. Her

confidence in this number always prompted her to draw cards to it no matter what odds were against her. If there was

a seven spot in her hand she would draw to it, and when she did the pot generally floated her way.

Away back in those olden days there were some sharp poker players among the New Jersey legislators and politicians, and when they felt like making a night of it without being disturbed they held a session at Mills Tavern, in a big room in a remote part of the house. Here, with a jug of apple jack on the floor and plenty of tobacco,

the players sweated and cussed and rejoiced as the case might be. There was a kitty, and Martha was always around to see that it was duly honored.

It was Martha's boast up to the day of her death that she had never been kissed by a man since her childhood days, and she won a good many dollars from men who, more from fun than anything else—since Martha was no peach—stacked their dollars against her kisses.

A man from Hunterdon County came nearer winning the prize than any other. It happened one night when Martha consented to take a hand in a game from which one of the players had been called.

She played that night in great luck, and she gathered in the chips with such monotonous regularity that at midnight the other players declared that it was no use trying to break her luck, and that the game might as well be stopped.

"I'm willing," said Martha, fingering the chips that were stacked in front of her and making a gloating calculation of their value.

"Hold on, boys," said Honeywell, a politician from Cape May County, "let's play one more hand for a kiss. Martha can bet her kisses against our money and every kiss shall be valued at ten dollars. What do you say?"

The men, of course, favored the proposition.

"You never knew me to back out of a game of poker," said Martha, with a confident smile.

The deal went around to Martha before the pot was opened. Honeywell opened it for \$10, the Hunterdon County man raised it \$20 and Martha stayed with three kisses, valued at \$30.

Honeywell, who had opened the pot with a pair of jacks and who had been playing in hard luck ever since the game started, threw his hand in the table with an expression of disgust, and refused to see the raise. The other four players had not come in, and the pot was between the Hunterdon man and Martha.

"Cards?" said Martha, as she picked up the pack.

"I'll play these," said he, "and bet you \$50 I've got you beat." That meant five kisses if Martha should call him, in addition to the three already bet. "Don't be afraid to call me, Martha," he added, banteringly. "Eight kisses won't hurt you any more than three will."

"I'm the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter," said Martha, as she slowly counted the cards off the pack. She drew four, threw her discard on the table, and ran her eyes over the cards she had drawn. She contemplated them carefully for a minute, and then looking her opponent in the eye, said: "I'll raise you five kisses. I don't want your money, and my advice to you is to not call me."

Everybody around the table burst into a roar of laughter.

"Well, Martha," said he, "you're a cool one and no mistake. You are trying to bluff a pat hand with a four card draw. I've got already thirteen kisses coming to me, but I guess we can both stand more, so I'll raise you \$50."

"I'll see that and raise you five more kisses," said Martha, calmly. "That's twenty-three kisses I owe you if your hand beats mine, but again I tell you to keep out."

"Not with this hand," he replied, with a chuckle. "I'd rather kiss you thirty-three times than twenty-three, so I'll raise you a hundred dollars."

"Well, sir," said Martha, with a grim smile, "I've given you a good chance to save your money and you don't seem to want to do it; now if you want to kiss me you've got to pay for it. I'll see your raise and bet you twenty more kisses that I've got the winning hand."

The Hunterdon man paused to reflect. It would be a great triumph to snatch fifty-three kisses from Martha's lips, but he had been up against her luck before, and his funds were running low. He scanned his hand again. It was very stout—three aces and a pair of fives, and they looked very encouraging. At the same time it would take \$200 to call, and he was not a rich man. But what could

he do? It would never do to sacrifice the pot now. He shoved \$190 into the pot and said: "I'll call you, Martha. I'm \$10 shy."

"I don't play shy pots," said Martha, coldly.

The Hunterdon man had to borrow \$10 to make good.

"I'm the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter," said Martha, as she slowly spread her cards on the table. "I held a seven-spot, and I drew three more."

If you can swallow that story perhaps this will not be too strong for your stomach. It also concerns this wonderful Martha Mills.

The New Jersey legislature was in session and the railroads had several important bills that they wanted passed, and as a consequence the lobbyists and members had money to burn. This made grist for Miss Martha's mill, and the kitty was a fat one every night.

One night six crack players came together in the tavern and Martha was invited to take a hand. She objected, on the strange ground that she felt unusually lucky, and suggested that they had better leave her out. But all the others protested that they also felt lucky, and insisted that she should sit in with them. They adjourned to the private room and began what was probably the shortest big game ever played.

"Now," said one of the players, before the hands

were dealt, "let's find out which one of us has the least money, and we'll watch his pile and play for table stakes."

The proposition met with approval of the other players. The man who had the least money was Sinclair, an Essex County man, and he had \$300. He spread the money on the table, and the next minute there was \$2,100 on the board.

Henry Whitehead, a South Jersey assemblyman, dealt the cards, and the pot was opened by Miles Graham, who started the ball with a bet of \$20. The player next to him raised the bet \$50. Martha saw the \$70 and the man on her left raised the bet \$50. When it came to the opener to see all the raises he gave it another boost of \$50, and that was raised \$50 and then another \$100. Meanwhile Martha simply trailed along.

Graham was confident that he had the best hand, for he raised the third, fourth and fifth time, and came to a standstill only when all the money was piled on the centre of the table.

"That's a pretty comfortable looking pile," remarked one of the players.

"Enough to buy cordwood for winter," said the hostess.

There were six pat hands out, and Martha was the only one to draw. "Well, gentlemen," she said, "it's all in the draw anyhow, and if I make my hand I take the money. It's a show down, so

here's my hand." She spread out the trey, four, five and six of diamonds and the ten of hearts.



"Now you may give me the seven-spot of diamonds."

"Now, Whitehead," said she, as she discarded the ten of hearts, "you may give me the seven-spot of diamonds; then I'll have a straight flush."

Whitehead dealt a card, turning it over as he threw it down, and to the amazement of the players it was the seven-spot of diamonds. The

straight flush was made and it won the pot. This ended the game, which lasted exactly four minutes, and Martha's profits were \$1,800.

That is the story, and you can believe just as much of it as you please. When you think it over, you can endeavor to recall how many railroads there were in 1850, and how awfully flush the lobbyists were in those days. You may also ask yourself whether it was the fashion to play straight

flushes fifty years ago. Of course if you can settle these points to your satisfaction, it will not be difficult to believe these two anecdotes about the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter.

CHAPTER IX.

OLD TIME POKER IN THE SOUTH—A JACK POT OF
NIGGERS—COLONEL RAFAEL AND
HIS HONOR.

It is a mighty hard thing to escape from the Oldest Inhabitant in this country. He is always present and he makes his presence known. The Oldest Inhabitant has spoiled more than a million stories, and the man with a string of fish does well to get out of the way when he sees him coming. He has it all made up that nothing that happens now is or can be as great or as wonderful as something in the past, and as all his witnesses are dead and you cannot very well accuse him of downright falsehood, he gets away with his statements every time.

To make the matter worse there are in every town a number of men who are in training to be Oldest Inhabitants. They are the fellows who are always talking about the palmy days of everything—the drama, baseball, hunting, dancing—any old thing that exists to-day. Poker, for instance. They don't play poker like they used to do; oh, dear no! In the palmy days the games were ten times as long and a hundred times more exciting, and as for the money bet—why, it is simply impos-

sible to estimate the oceans of money that used to pass over the cloth.

As illustrating the perfectly ferocious way they used to play poker in the palmy days, the reminiscence of a gentleman from one of the lower counties of Georgia, as told in the Kimball House, Atlanta, may be taken as a sample.

"Poker is a mighty funny thing," he said. "You never know when you have run against a good player. Take me, for instance. I was here in the Legislature, years ago, and I know I didn't appear to be what you call up-to-date—not a bit of it. But I did know how to play poker. Learned it down our way, with the boys. The members from Augusta and Macon and Savannah thought they had a soft piece of pie when they got me into the first game. Well, you oughter seen how they got beautifully left.

"I was here in the Legislature the whole of that session, and I sent supplies home to the folks every now and then, built and paid for a new corn crib, bought the old lady a new stove and a sewing machine and hadn't touched a per diem, which Bob Hardman paid me in bulk at the end of the session. I tell you, them fellers was surprised in their man!"

There was high rolling for you! A stove and a sewing machine and a corn crib—he must have been ahead nearly a hundred dollars. And here is what another old-timer of Tennessee let off in Memphis the other day.

"Times ain't what they used to be in this town. In them days, 'long about '66, '67 and '68, money was plentiful and sportin' people rolled them high. Jefferson street from No. 9 clean down to Third street was gamblin' houses, and everyone was straight except two. And say, that puts me in mind of a lucky play I had one time, which sounds like a fairy tale, but it's true. I beat the game at No. 40 Jefferson street, and they didn't do a thing but deal the old thing there. It was one of the brace houses, and the fellers that worked there were so crooked that they slept in beds made in the shape of the letter S. They couldn't get no rest in no other kind.

"Up at the El Dorado on Saturday nights the keno game began at seven o'clock, at fifty cents a card, and ran that way until nine, and then it was a dollar a card. Well, I goes down there one night, and havin' my luck with me by twelve o'clock I had salted away \$600. Next day it was rainin' and drizzlin', and I didn't have nothin' else to do, so I dropped in No. 40 and took a hand at poker. I knew the game was bent, but I had this money and didn't mind takin' a chance.

"I hadn't been in the game long until I picks up four aces. I bet them up and down and all around, and a little man across the table keeps comin' back at me. When it came to a show down I had him beat, and the banker announces that the game is broke.

"I loaf around until they gets another stake, and the game starts again. Would I take a hand? Of course I would, and I did. I played along and finally picks up four deuces. I keeps bettin' them, until the show

down comes again, and of course I has the other feller beat. The banker says the game is broke again and I cashes in. They were fixin' up hands, you know, and I gets the cooler twice when it was meant for the other man. The man who was to get the cooler gets my hand and of course he thinks he has the cooler, so he bets the bank's roll at me.



"Where's the sucker that broke this game?"

"The man who owns the joint was upstairs asleep, and they went and woke him up, for another stake, maybe. He comes down all on fire, and he says:

“ ‘Where’s the sucker that broke this game?’

“And I says: ‘He’s right here, but he ain’t no sucker.’ He knows me, and when I says that, he smiles and says: ‘Well, if anybody has to get it, I’m glad it’s you. But, say, you’re mighty lucky.’

“And then he turns around and fires the flat-heads that fixed up the hands wrong. I wouldn’t tell this story unless I could prove it, and the man that can prove it is right back in the saloon yonder.”

And the man back in the saloon was called in and swore to it. Which goes to prove either that it didn’t happen or else that they had some mighty clumsy brace men in the palmy days.

Honestly, though, there were palmy poker days in the South in the time when cotton was king. A certain class had a lot of money, and had it in the very worst way for them. For eleven months in the year they made nothing, and then when the crop was sold they got their money all in a bunch, provided, of course, that they had not mortgaged it in advance. As a consequence they had a high old time while the money lasted. It was something like getting a legacy once a year, and we all know what the average man does with that. It was a happy-go-lucky way of living, a peculiarity of the South, and its only parallel is seen in mining camps when some formerly unlucky prospector strikes it rich.

Take a man with ten to twenty thousand dollars

in his pocket, a man who has not known what it is to finger more than a twenty-dollar bill for months, and turn him loose, and it is not hard to predict what will happen. If he knows anything about cards—and gambling was once part of a Southern man's education—he is going to play them to the top of his bent. Then again, the very nature of a Southern man was to be free and liberal, and in nothing can freeness and liberality be better displayed than in betting. Can it be wondered that many a Southern planter, after selling his crop in the North, started home with a large wad, and arrived there with nothing left but his honor?

These times have passed, never to come again. Poker is still played in the South, and it will never die out, but the day of big stakes and reckless betting has gone into history. While it lasted it permeated young as well as old. As the old cock crows the young one learns and the boys were not a whit behind their seniors.

One December night not so many years ago a party of seniors in the Southern University were having a social game of poker. This old college had turned out at about the same time Howell Cobb, Alexander Stephens, Robert Toombs and other famous characters of the olden days, and was redolent of reminiscences.

Uncle Tub was the night watchman of the campus. He saw a light in the room, when all the rest of the building was dark, and as in duty bound

he crawled up three flights of stairs and walked into the room without ceremony, causing the utmost consternation.

"Hi! I cotch yer!" he exclaimed. "I'se gwine ter lay it all out ter de doctor 'bout dis yere fust class sittin' up here after hours an' gamblin', jess like der Jews."

The crowd immediately surrounded the old man and protested that they were simply boning up for an "exam," but Uncle Tub would have none of it.

"Go 'way, boss," he said, sternly. "Ain't I done heard de rattle of de chips? Ain't I done seed yer wipe in dat dar jack pot?"

"What?"

"Dat jack pot," Uncle Tub repeated with emphasis. "Ain't I done seed yer wipe it in? Don't tell me."

Uncle Tub's knowledge of the game came as a revelation.

"Uncle Tub," said the tall senior at the end of the table, "I am astonished at you. You are a deacon in the church, and a man of unquestioned probity, and I cannot believe that you are acquainted with the sinful game of poker as your words would indicate."

"Dat's all right, boss," returned the old man. "I wasn't always a deacon."

"Do you mean to say that you have played poker?"

"No; I ain't adzactly played de game."

"Then what do you know about it?"

The old darkey had seated himself upon a trunk with his lantern dangling between his knees, and he assumed an air of dignity terrible to witness.

"De good Lawd, boss," he said, with his eyes cast up to the ceiling, "don't ax me about kyards, kase dem is sinful things, an' I know more about dem dan you kin tell me in a thousand years. You

b o y s oughter
bin here in de
days afore de
wah. Dem was
s h o days an'
dem was s h o
poker players.
I know lots
about de Bible
now an' kin
quote from
Genysis ter de
R e v u l a-
shun, but in
dem days I
knows poker
from A ter Z."



"I was in a jack pot of niggers once."

"Oh, come now, Uncle Tub," said the senior, warningly. "We can't believe that."

"Don't believe it? Lemme tell yer," said the

old man, waxing indignant. "I was in a jack pot of niggers one time."

"What's that?" The students had left their places by this time, and encircled the old darkey, who swelled with pride at the attention he was attracting.

"I say I was in a jack pot of niggers one time," repeated Uncle Tub, "an' Marse Henry won me," repeated the old watchman, slowly and thoughtfully. Then he put his lantern on the floor and told his story.

"Dat war long time afore de wah," he said slowly. "Most of de young bucks what come to college in dem days had der nigger man wid 'em. I belong to young Marse George B——. He was a Satan, dat boy, but his daddy was er angel.

"Dere was fough of 'em—all young bucks, jes like you all. Dere was fough of us niggers, too; all about de same age, an' we all sets dere an' sees de game. I tell you, chillun, dat was a game. It kep' gittin' hotter an' hotter. My young marse lose all his cash an' then he gin to lose what wasn't cash. He gits madder an' madder. Marse Henry C—— won all de stakes, an' jes nacherly keeps on winnin' lak he born to win.

"Atter while my young marse say:

" 'Damme, dar goes all I'se got in de worl' but Tobe.' Dat's what dey call me in dem days—Tobe. 'Fore I knowed it I done heard him say: .

“ ‘Les make a jack pot ouden de niggers.’

“Dey was all in for it. Dey ax de udder niggers an’ yer humble servant to stand in de middle of de flo’, an’ Marse George he dole de kyards. He ketched a good pair, kase he axed me to step up to de table.

“ ‘I opens dis pot,’ he says, ‘wid Tobe.’

“ ‘I stays in it wid Jack,’ says Marse Henry C——, axin’ Jack, his nigger, ter step ’long side of me.

“De rest of the gemmuns dey puts dere niggers in too, an’ dar we was, waitin’ for de call of de cards.

“Well, I kaint tell how it happens, but Marse Henry C—— won de whole lot of us, hair an’ hide.

“Den he says, ‘Good-night, gemmuns,’ an’ he walks down stairs, us a-follerin’ lak sheep.

“I mout er belonged to dat man to dis day, but nex’ mawnin’ Marse George’s pa he comes to de college an’ buys me back. Den he tells Marse George he can’t hab no nigger to wait on him.”

“What became of the rest of the colored men?” asked the tall senior.

“Law, honey,” responded Uncle Tub, “I reckon dey was all bought back lak me. But dat ain’t got nothin’ to do wid dis. You better stop dis gamblin’. Hit’ll git ye into tribulation.”

Although it is almost a safe bet to say that all Southern men play poker, there is a marked differ-

ence in the way they play it. Gentlemen of the old school have a way of playing on honor that is apt to confuse the moderns, who have reduced the game to a science. With the latter the "board is the play"—that is, only a show down wins, and what you say goes for nothing. In the old school a gentleman's word is as good as his cards, and when Majah Dudley says "I have two pairs, kings up," and Captain Wing replies, "Mine are threes," the Majah throws his hand into the deck, and takes another drink, without asking for verification. Common sense inclines to the modern school; sentiment supports the school of honor. It is only when the two schools come together that there is any trouble.

Colonel Rafael of Alabama was a player of the old school. He learned his cards before the war with a party of rich plantation men like himself, who made poker playing a pastime but not a craze. Perhaps twice a month they would meet at the residence of one of their number, and there on the broad porch, attired in cool linen, with plenty of tobacco, and two or three bright colored boys at hand to furnish mint juleps and kindred beverages ad libitum, they reclined in easy chairs and whiled away a couple of hours in a game that never roused the passions or excited future animosity. The supply of chips was meagre, and they were used mostly for anteing, since nearly all the betting was by word of mouth.

Judge J would say languidly, "I open this pot for five dollars," and Major P would say, "Judge, I'll have to raise you about ten dollars." Whereupon the Judge would reply, "I'll call you, Major." "A pair of tens, sah," says the Major. "That's good," says the Judge, and tosses his cards on the table face downward, and the Major does the same, and rakes in the chips. Once in a while, after a stiff argument back and forth, the players might show their hands, just to explain why they thought they had the other fellow beaten, and then there would be a great amount of dignified talk about the peculiarities and possibilities of the great national game, but no one for a moment entertained the idea that any one would miscall his hand. A sharper sitting in such a game would have won all the plantations in time, but there was no chance of such a happening. Strangers were rare in those days, and when one was introduced he had excellent recommendations.

When the war came, poker was discarded for a sterner game. The Colonel served through the entire conflict, and had no time for relaxation. After the war when he went back to his plantation he found it only in name. The slaves were gone, four out of five of his old chummies were dead or gone no one knew where, and in addition the Colonel needed every cent he could rake and scrape, to plant crops, make repairs and in a general way put

the plantation on a paying basis once more. It was hard scratching for five or six years, but the Colonel was not a man to sit down with his finger in his mouth and cry about the ill fortunes of war, so that in time he got out of debt, saw his way to a fair income, and felt that he could afford to take a little relaxation.

It was in the winter of '71 and '72 he came North. He stopped on his way at Richmond, where he met a few old army friends, and at Washington, where he met more, and then he extended his trip to New York, which he had last seen in 1859. As may be imagined the big town was a sight to this fine old Southern gentleman. Very few New Yorkers realize what an immense change has taken place in their city since before the war, and although since 1872 improvement has been much more rapid, there was enough in '72 to justify the Colonel's amazement. For several days he walked Broadway, curious to see, and an object of curiosity to others. Before the war the Colonel would have been no unusual sight, but times had changed, and he with his stately stride, immense head of white hair, and calm, imperious air, seemed like a visitor from a past age.

It was on the fourth day of his stay that the Colonel met a man he knew. It was in front of the St. Nicholas, and the friend was one who had been a lieutenant in his regiment. After Appo-

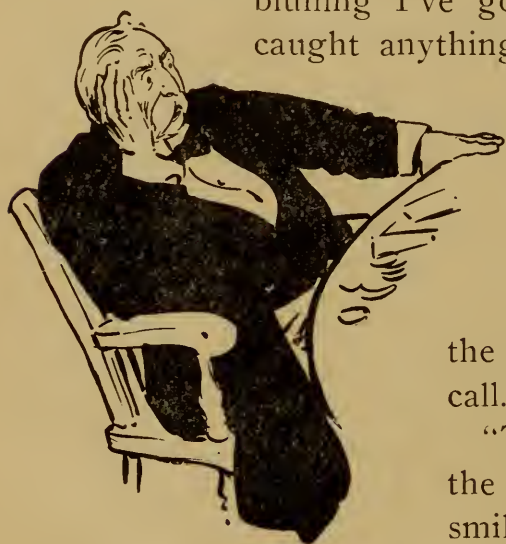
mattox, Lieutenant Wickes studied law for three years in Baltimore, and then came to New York to practice. He had been rather successful and was prepared to introduce his old commander to several of the best clubs. In fact, they went to one that very night, and that is where the Colonel had his introduction to the modern game of poker.

A city judge, a leading physician, a banker, the Colonel and his friend Wickes made up the party, and the game was played in a snug room, with cigars and cocktails handy. For quite a time the game went on without any special incident. It was recalled afterward that the Colonel was a steady loser. Once or twice he called and responded "good" in his old-fashioned way, when his opponent's hand was announced, and on the occasions when he was called he announced his hand, and when beaters were shown, threw his cards into the deck without comment, except a courtly little bow. It was a game of easy stakes, very little bluffing, no high betting, and a great deal of talking and story telling, so that the Colonel might have imagined that he was back on the piazza of the old plantation.

Then there came a hand in which he was disillusionized. It was the banker's deal, and the Colonel held the age. He got two aces, and it was one of the traditions of the Southern game to always raise on two aces before the draw. Everybody

came in and the Colonel raised it five dollars. Wickes and the judge stayed, the physician came back with ten more, and the banker dropped out. The Colonel chivalrously tilted in ten, and Wickes and the judge laid down. The judge saw the raise, and he and the Colonel drew cards. The judge drew one card to kings and fives and did not fill; the Colonel drew three and caught his ace.

The judge bet a chip as a feeler; the Colonel raised it ten dollars. The judge said to himself: "He had a pair to go—probably aces. If he is bluffing I've got him; if he has caught anything, even a pair, he has me beat.



They supposed he was about to have a fit.

Therefore it is the best policy to call him now."

The judge shoved a ten into the pot, and said, "I'll call."

"Three aces," said the Colonel, with a smile.

"Beats two pair," said the judge, briefly.

At the same time he spread his hand out on the table, and then shoved them into the centre. The Colonel bowed and tossed his hand into the dis-

card, and raked in the pot. The judge hesitated for an instant and then stretched out his hand.

"Did you say three aces?" he asked.

The Colonel looked at him in surprise. "I said three aces, sir," he said, calmly.

The cards he had discarded were lying on top of the pack, and the judge leaned over and turned them up. The aces were there, of course, and the judge dropped them with the careless remark, "All right," and sank back quietly in his chair. Not so the Colonel. For an instant his red face got redder, and then the color slowly receded, until it was absolutely pallid. The others noticed the change, and no one but Wickes could divine the cause, and not he right away. They supposed that he was about to have a fit, and the physician was on his feet in an instant.

But the Colonel recovered his voice, and rose to his feet where he stood erect as if on parade.

"Wickes," he said, sternly, "you introduced me here, and I want to ask you a question. Do you consider me a gentleman?"

"Why, Colonel, what do you mean?" stammered Wickes.

"Answer me, sir!"

"Certainly I do. Who has dared to dispute it?"

"It has been disputed, sir," thundered the Colonel, looking at the judge, witheringly. "When a gentleman makes a statement, sir, and another man

doubts it, that is a reflection on the first gentleman's honor, sir."

"But, Colonel," said Wickes, soothingly, "no one has disputed your word."

"Yes, there has been one," and he looked fixedly at the judge.

Even then that functionary did not understand, but a great light broke in on Wickes.

"Oh, yes; I see! You mean that the judge——. But, Colonel, that is the way we play poker in New York. Every player is entitled to see all the hands played, and the judge had a right to see your cards."

"A right, sir!" exclaimed the Colonel, angrily. "Of course you had a right, but the fact that you insisted on exercising that right shows that you doubted my word. By gad, sir, I told you I had three aces, and yet you deliberately looked at my cards, sir, to see if I spoke the truth! I have seen the time, sir, when I would have called you out, sir, for less than that."

By this time all the men were on their feet, and they had realized that it was a very serious matter to the old gentleman. Unfortunately, the judge was a hard-headed product of Vermont, and although a gentleman beyond dispute, had no sympathy with such strained notions of honor; and to him the Colonel's rage was amusing. Consequently, although he apologized, and assured the

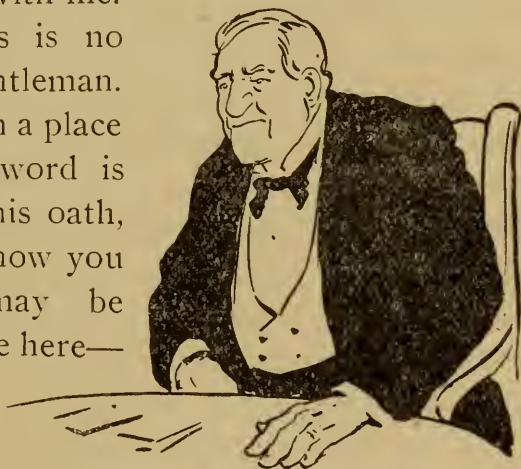
old man that he had not the least intention of giving him offence, he would not admit that there was anything wrong in his insisting on a show of cards. What the others said was to no purpose, and the final result was that the Colonel threw up his cards, and left the house.

"Wickes," he said, gravely, when they were outside, "I leave to-morrow for Alabama, and I wish you were going with me.

Believe me, this is no country for a gentleman. I could not live in a place where a man's word is not as good as his oath, and I don't see how you can. There may be money to be made here—

I don't doubt it, but where is the power to enjoy it, unless

a man can be treated as a gentleman at all times? Wickes, it's lucky I didn't have my pistol with me to-night. Damme, the idea of being asked—good-by, Wickes!"



Unfortunately the Judge was a hard-headed product of Vermont.

CHAPTER X.

POKER AND HYPNOTISM—A YOUNG MAN WHO CAN READ
CARDS—HOW FIVE ACES WERE BEATEN—THE MAN
WHO LAID DOWN A STRAIGHT FLUSH.

It is a mighty lucky thing that the professors of sleight of hand do not take to crooked card playing against the professionals, or that crooked card players do not go through an apprenticeship in sleight of hand before embarking on their nefarious careers. Of course the sharps think they can manipulate the papers in a way that defies detection, but a man like Hermann or Kellar could cheat them while their noses were on the pack.

Hermann, in his day, was fond of playing poker, but he never resorted to any tricks with the cards while playing. There would have been no show for anyone else if he had. Imagine a man like that sitting in a game unknown with two or three fellows who thought they knew how to stack the cards! He could have palmed a cold deck on them every third deal if he had wished.

But the real danger to the card sharps will come when the hypnotists get in their work. At present hypnotism seems to be in a respectable stage. It is regarded as something weird and almost sacred, something like spiritualism, and the experts only

use it to illustrate a lot of theories about the soul or the mind or things that nobody knows anything about. But of late a lot of cold-blooded scientists have delved into the question, and have pretty nearly proved that hypnotism can be learned, like chemistry or any other science.

Now this means a great deal. If there is nothing sacred or holy about hypnotism, and it does not require that the hypnotist shall be good or pure, there will be a lot of fellows who will take it up for revenue only. They are going to use it in finance and trade, and after awhile some hypnotist will sit down to the card table, and skin everybody like sixty. Of course, if two of these hypnotists run up against each other, there would be a mischief of a time. But then, I suppose, they would join hands, form a partnership, as it were, and keep up the skinning process. That would create a panic in crooked pokerdom.

The danger is already imminent. Texas has produced a young man, named Victor Roy, who is a natural mind reader. He says that as soon as he looks into one's face for a minute the person's whole character and antecedents loom up plainly in his mind. You see, right at the start, he could size up the man who was trying to do him. Roy has been known to meet a man for the first time, and instantly tell him his name, his business, married or single, and all that kind of thing. He also

knows whether a man is honest or otherwise, and he could make his fortune as a detective if so inclined.

But that isn't a circumstance to his deadly skill as a poker player. He does not really know how to play poker, that is, he has never played for keeps, and it is only recently that he has learned the relative rank of poker hands. At the same time it may be remarked that he doesn't have to learn much more than he knows now.

He has been tested time and time again in games of poker and never loses. Many noted gamblers have called on him, and put him to the test in games of poker. He eyes each player as they pick up their cards, and often before the betting begins he will call out to the man who has a flush, threes or a full, and tell him to take the chips, as he has the best hand, and he never makes a mistake in doing so. A wealthy gambler from Denver offered him \$5,000 a year to travel over the country and play for him. But Roy refused, saying that for him to play poker would be nothing less than robbery of his victims. That is very true, but just suppose that some other man like that without Roy's scruples should take a tour of the card rooms!

As a matter of fact, there is good evidence that some such man is abroad, working his remarkable powers on the unsuspecting. The tale is told

about a man who was taken in and done for, and in order to bring out all the weird effects it is well to let the victim tell his own story.

"I quit playing poker, not to keep out of the poorhouse but to save myself from the madhouse. The last game I played came near sending me to one of the latter institutions, and since then I haven't so much as played whist, for at the sight of the cards I lose all certainty of myself and feel again the terrible sensations of that last game.

"I had played all my adult life up to four years ago, and had been singularly fortunate, and to make a rough estimate I will say that fortune had favored me to the extent of at least \$30,000 up to the time I am going to tell about. Of course, I did not save it all, as I was a high liver, but I had quite a sum with me when one day I took a notion to go to Havana.

"I was then staying at Jacksonville, and from there I went to Tampa, and boarded the steamer Olivette, and was soon out on the Gulf. We had to touch at Key West, and I knew that we would have to spend the whole night on the boat, so I suggested to three other men, all apparently gentlemen, that we have a game of poker. They assented and we were soon playing in the saloon.

"We had been playing perhaps an hour when I noticed a commonplace, everyday-looking fellow about thirty years old looking on at the game

rather inattentively, as if he took but little interest in it, but was merely trying to keep himself occupied. Out of mere courtesy I asked him to join us, and he at first declined, but when all of us insisted he rose up and came over to our table.

"He did not play the innocent, or work off any old game on the crowd, nor did he impress us as being an expert; just an ordinary gentleman player. He played as if he were only trying to pass the time away. At the end of three hours that fellow, who said his name was Callaway, kept bobbing up and down and playing such an even game that he wasn't ten dollars either way from the starting point.

"It was then nearly midnight, so one of the crowd suggested that we take off the limit, and bet as high as we pleased during the last half hour. As no one objected, this was done, and then came lively betting.

"I must have been \$3,500 ahead of the game when the cards went hoodooed. We had a jack pot, made up of five-hundred-dollar bills, and for nine deals no one got a pair to open it. At every deal we sweetened that pot for another \$500.

"Finally the cards went to the other extreme and I could tell from the expressions on the faces of the other four men that everyone could open the pot. It was Callaway's say and he tossed in two one-hundred-dollar bills as a starter. He was met

all around and then the drawing began. I neglected to say at the beginning that we were playing the game with all the new-fangled attachments, such as a 'looloo,' composed of a pot draw of two diamonds and three clubs, which beats all the other hands, but which can be played only once in a single game. We were also playing with a fifty-three-card deck; that is, we were playing the joker to count anything its holder might designate. The looloo had already been played, and I knew that no man in that crowd could beat the hand I held when we came to make this last draw.

"Two men stood pat, and the other two drew one card each. I held four legitimate aces and a seven-spot. Not hoping for a better hand, but to deceive my opponents as to the strength of my hand, I discarded the seven-spot and drew one. When I looked at the new card I could hardly repress a whoop. It was the joker, making me five aces, a hand such as was never held before.

"Then the battle began, and I have never seen such furious betting short of a party of millionaires. We kept raising the value of the pot, until it was worth half the salary of the president of the United States. I bet steadily and confidently, knowing no hand could beat mine except a looloo, and that had already been played. Finally all the others dropped out except Callaway, and to make sure that he was not betting under a misapprehension

I reminded him that the looloo had been played.

" 'I'm not betting on a looloo. I'll raise you \$500,' he said, quietly.

"As I had by this time put away about every dollar, and as I didn't care to rob the man, I called him. He looked seriously disappointed, and I wondered what the mischief kind of a hand he had.

" 'Is that all you care to stake?' he asked, as if surprised that I should have lost my nerve.

" 'Not exactly,' I replied, getting nettled. 'I'll just pull in my call, and raise you a hundred.'

" 'Good!' said Callaway, as he met my raise, and shoved in two hundred more.

"I was beginning to get confused, and was uncertain of myself. I recalled that Callaway had shown himself to be a careful better, and I couldn't understand what impelled him to keep on. I got rattled as I sat there looking into his pale gray eyes and eager face. He kept his eyes fastened on my face while he played, and I began to think that he could read my hand from my expression. I made a feeble little raise, and after a long stare he slowly called my bet.

"With the five aces, I suddenly felt a lack of confidence, but I spread out the cards on the table, and said, boldly: 'Five aces ought to take the pot. Hand it over.'

"I was just reaching out to rake in the spoils, about \$28,000 in cold cash, when Callaway spoke out in his smooth, easy tones:

"Not so fast, my friend. You are suffering from an optical delusion, caused from over-excitement. Those are not aces you hold, for I have four legitimate single-spotters,' and he held up his hand for me to look at.

"Sure enough my eyes told me that he held four aces and a queen. Then he told me to take an-



"Not so fast, my friend. Those are not aces you hold."

other look at my hand, and to my intense surprise I saw that I had only a full house on jacks. He never moved his eyes from mine while he was talking, and the glances of his gray orbs made me shiver uncomfortably. So he pocketed the money while I stood looking on without a protest.

"The three other fellows had stepped to the

saloon sideboard to investigate a bottle, and as Callaway made the last note vanish they came back to the table and asked who won.

“‘I did,’ answered Callaway.

“‘He did,’ I said, like a schoolboy learning a lesson.

Callaway said good-night and stepped out on the deck, while I fell back in my chair, cursing my bad luck. In a few moments one of the men called to me to come on deck for a breath of fresh air. The voice seemed to awaken me from a kind of sleep. I looked down at the two hands on the table and saw, as plainly as I ever saw the light of day, that the hand I had held was made up of four aces and the joker. I picked up Callaway’s hand and was dazed to see nothing better than a bobtail flush.

“I realized then that I had been cheated; that the fellow had cast over me some sort of magnetic spell and convinced me against my reason that his hand was the better. Then I made myself ridiculous. I ran on deck and charged him with cheating me.

“He was quite gentle and courteous in his manner. He suggested to me that I was still suffering from the effects of over-excitement and had better go to my bed and sleep it off. Of course the three other players sided in with him. They told me that I was surely insane to charge Callaway with cheating, after I had told them in the

saloon that he had won. From laughing at me they finally got angry, and in the end pushed me into my stateroom and locked me in.

"I saw Callaway a year later in Memphis, and he was then giving exhibitions of wonderful mesmeric power, and then I was fully satisfied as to the cause of my fearful loss on board the *Olivette*."

This is wonderful enough to be true, and yet it is not entirely convincing. It is just possible that the good drinking of the *Olivette*'s sideboard went to our hero's head. There is a case on record where a winning hand was beaten without any recourse to hypnotism, and the other fellow didn't have a gun, neither.

"You see," said the man who was the victim, "I was a young fellow who got tangled up in poker with a lot of boys that could manipulate the cards, and I knew it, but I relied on my luck to pull me out even in the end.

"As may be imagined, I got it in the neck with distressing frequency, but at last my time came. One of the best of the sharks was dealing in a five-handed game, and it was my age. As I picked up my hand after the cards had been dealt I discovered that I had the king, queen, jack, ten and nine of diamonds—a straight flush.

"The three men behind me passed out in succession, and I said to myself, 'That's just my luck.' But the dealer stayed, and I of course raised him.

He saw my raise and asked me how many cards I wanted. I told him to help himself, and as he discarded three cards I argued that he had two aces, and oh! how I prayed that he would get the other two, so that I could paralyze him.

"After he had skinned his hand the betting began, and it continued until my money was all up, and of necessity there was a call. I asked him what he had, and he replied, "Four aces," the hand which I had given him credit for, and which my hand beat. I knew I had the winning hand, but somehow or other I said "It's good," and threw my hand into the deck. It touched the dead-wood before I could recover my scattered senses, and of course I was done for.

"Then I turned over my cards and showed him what I had, but he took the pot. It was the first time on record that a straight flush was beaten by four aces without a gun. It was simply because for one second I got rattled. I have never held a straight flush since and never expect to hold one again. The man who doesn't know how to treat them right when they come along doesn't deserve to get them."

The only match for this painful incident that I know occurred in Wyoming to a friend of mine. He had been sitting for three hours in the worst kind of luck, when he picked up a pat straight flush. It was his age, and there were five other players, and every mother's son passed out.

He was so exasperated that he first spread out his hand on the table, then he tore up the cards, and finally he swore that he never would play poker again. And he kept his word—for nearly three weeks.

CHAPTER XI.

A LIFE-LONG GAME—THE GREAT MORGAN-DANIELSON
BETTING MATCH—FOUR HOURS TO OPEN A JACK
POT—THREE THOUSAND DOLLARS FOR A NAP.

As I remarked at the beginning, there is no doubt that it is both an advantage and an objection to the game of poker that it has no ending. There is no stipulated number of "points," no bank to break, and no time to quit, so that, if the money held out and there was a sufficient number of recruits to take the place of the dead and wounded, a poker game, like the brook in the poem, could run on forever. Even with the original players instances are not uncommon where men have played for thirty-six hours or more, until tired nature asserted herself and called the game. Of course, if recesses are taken, a game can go on forever.

Edward W. Pettus, at one time senator from Alabama, was an inveterate poker player, and if the time that venerable gentleman spent in the game could be summed up many years would stand on the debit side of the ledger.

There lived in Selma, Alabama, the town where the senator hailed from, in the early '70s, a wealthy railroad president, Major Lanier, of the old Alabama Central Railroad, running between Selma

and Meridian, Miss., now a part of the Southern Railway system. The major and the senator were boon companions, with a friendship almost as strong as Damon and Pythias, and they used to spend their summers at the major's summer home in Talledega, above Selma.

Here they put in about all of their time playing poker, and no one else was permitted to take a hand in the game. It was strictly a gentleman's game; very few chips and an unlimited number of I O U's. There was no hurry or excitement about the playing. Each gentleman took all the time he wanted to make his bets, and it was not unusual for the game to come to a standstill for fifteen or twenty minutes while a good story was told. Five to ten dollars was about the average bet, but there was no limit, and once in a while the stakes mounted up into the hundreds.

Old Manuel, the major's body servant, was always present at these games. He was the drink mixer and dispenser, took care of the chips and cards, and kept account of the winnings and losses. At the end of each year he would render accounts promptly, and whichever was indebted to the other would hand Manuel a check to square up the game. At the end of one year Pettus owed the major \$10,000, another year the major was indebted to the senator for \$13,000, and so the game would run. And this was kept up until the

major's death, when the senator stopped playing, as he would not take up with another partner.

This, however, is not the record of one game, but of a series of games. A single game that lasted a lifetime, and even longer, is much more wonderful. Governor Hogg, of Texas, never plays poker himself, but he can tell more good stories about poker than any other public man in his section of the country. His story of the great Morgan-Danielson game, is one of the most unique in all the history of poker.

Old man Morgan was one of the most inveterate poker players in the Lone Star State away back in the '50s. His passion for the game was rivaled only by that of his bosom friend and neighbor, Major Danielson. The two old cronies used to get together every night and indulge in a quiet game for table stakes. Sometimes they lost large sums to one another, but they were both enormously rich, and at the end of a year the balance was generally pretty even.

One night they started to play soon after supper—folks dined in the middle of the day in those times. The exact date was June 15, 1853, and the hour was 8 p. m.

After they had been playing a couple of hours, Morgan, who had just finished dealing, straightened up in his chair and became rigid. The next moment he kicked himself vigorously, because he

feared he had betrayed to Danielson the fact that he had an extraordinary hand. But the Major had also caught something wonderful. Each was so excited that he didn't notice the perturbation of the other. Both were so nervous that they could scarcely speak.

At last Major Danielson started the ball. He



Inside of a couple of hours the action became fast and furious.

bet cautiously at first, and so did Morgan. Then the betting became livelier, and inside of a couple of hours the action was fast and furious. After midnight the bets became larger. Each of the players had had about \$10,000 on the table when the game began. At 2 o'clock in the morning all the chips were stacked up in the centre, but neither of the men showed any signs of weariness.

At Morgan's suggestion they then made it a no-limit game. Then they began to bet with thousand-dollar checks, and pretty soon the table groaned beneath the weight of wealth, or it would have done so if the wealth had been in gold or silver. Daylight found them still betting, and the players had written their checks for the aggregate amounts they had wagered during the night. Each of these checks bore five figures.

Stopping only for meals, Morgan and Danielson continued to bet against each other on these wonderful hands until nightfall. Then they adjourned for six hours sleep, and resumed the play again at midnight. They kept it up for the rest of the week, and for the remainder of the year. At the end of the year each of them had invested his entire fortune—cash, bonds, stocks, livestock, land, houses, everything—in that game. People began to flock to Austin from all parts of the State, and from the neighboring principal cities, to see the great Morgan-Danielson game.

The war came along, but the game never stopped. Morgan and Danielson were both too old to be conscripted, so they stayed home and went on with their betting. Finally it became apparent that neither would ever call the other, so the hands were sealed up separately in tin boxes, and the rest of the deck was put in another box. The three boxes were deposited in the National

Bank, each bearing the seals of the players and of a dozen witnesses. Then Morgan and Danielson went on with their betting.

Both of the old men died in 1872, having been playing for twenty-one years, but they left instructions in their wills to the effect that their eldest sons should carry on the game. The heirs did so for five years. Then one of them was killed in a railway accident and the other went crazy.

Their eldest sons, however, are carrying on the game in the same old way. Every time either of them gets a few hundred dollars together, he goes to Austin and raises the other fellow. Both families are as poor as church mice now, and it is all they can do to get the necessaries of life, but they are game to the core, and so long as either of them can earn a cent the world will never learn what sort of hands old man Morgan and Major Danielson drew on that balmy June evening, more than forty-six years ago. The heirs know, but they are sworn to secrecy.

Taking this story to be strictly on the square, it is easy to guess that each man held four aces, and, as they were not playing straight flushes, each had an invincible hand. How they each got four aces is another story. Probably some youngster of the family rung in a cold deck on the old gentlemen, and then, when he saw the mischief he had done, was afraid to acknowledge the trick.

For a straight out, continuous game of poker the following instance is probably the best on record.

Twenty-five years ago there were half a dozen men in New Jersey who never failed to play a stiff game of poker when they came together. They were Oliver Wilson of Barnegat, Silas Daniels of Philipsburg, Hosea Brockway of Princeton, James Howe of Ewing, John Strange of Titusville and William Tomlinson of Burlington. All these men were rich, and when they were once interested in a game of cards they bet with a recklessness that always astonished those who happened to be looking on. In those days star chamber sessions were almost unknown, and the players were as likely to get into a red-hot contest with the paste-boards in a hotel bar room or the sitting room of a tavern as anywhere.

At that time deer hunting in Atlantic County was looked upon as the best sport it was possible to find in the state, and in the fall hundreds of men went to the pines for the purpose of hunting. The headquarters for these hunters was McDonald's tavern, a barn-like structure in the midst of the woods, where sleeping, eating and drinking accommodations were furnished at somewhat extravagant prices.

Rough as it was, Andy McDonald's tavern was patronized liberally by a big gang of free money spenders, and during the deer-hunting season the

establishment was the scene every night of drinking bouts, good natured fistic encounters, rifle practice, in which bullets were shot across the bar room at a white ring chalked on the wall, and all kinds of card games.

One night Silas Daniels, John Strange, James Howe and Hosea Brockway met at the tavern. Strange was considered one of the best poker players in the State. His nerve was as steady as the foundations of the earth, and when he took a notion to raise a bet he did it as if he had the United States treasury at his back.

When the crowd was properly keyed up, Andy McDonald, who was chief dispenser of liquid joy, and who always had an eye out for his own welfare, said:

"Mr. Strange, playin' any cards nowadays?"

"No," replied Strange, "I ain't had what you might call a real lively settin' for a good while."

"Feel like playing a few hands now, Strange?" asked Daniels, carelessly.

"You know me, Daniels," replied Strange. "I'm always lookin' for chances of that kind."

The two men walked over to a table that stood on one side of the room. At the table sat James Howe and Hosea Brockway engrossed in a game of seven-up.

"Gentlemen," said Strange, "what do you say; shall we make this game four-handed?"

"Four-handed seven-up?" asked Howe.

"Not much," said Strange, contemptuously. "Poker."

"Well, I reckon it would be more interesting," laughed Howe. "How about you, Brock?"

"Bring along the chips, Andy," shouted Brockway, joyously, "and a brand new pack of cards. Strange is out for a game to-night, and I guess we'd better give it to him."

The cards and chips were produced, and at nine o'clock the four men began what proved to be the most remarkable game of poker ever played in the State. The news spread rapidly through the tavern that Daniels, Howe, Strange and Brockway had got into a game of poker, and every man went to watch it. The players were used to this sort of thing, however, and made no objection, unless someone made remarks on their manner of playing; then that man would have to leave the room, or something would break.

The players were feeling their toddies pretty keenly, and the game opened with a bet of \$1,000 in bank notes made by Daniels. Strange looked out of the corner of his eye for a moment, and then laid down his cards. Brockway did likewise. Howe called the bet and won it on three deuces. Daniels was bluffing; when he laid down his hand he had only ace high.

The pace was now fairly set and the game went

briskly on. On the next deal Daniels had revenge, for he got back his \$1,000 and \$800 besides that Strange had risked on a pair of kings. That winning was doubly satisfactory to Daniels because it was off Strange, and it nettled Strange to have Daniels crow over him.

Drinks were had and the game proceeded. A jack pot was started and then one of the most remarkable features of the game took place. It lacked a few minutes of ten o'clock when the jack was declared, and although the cards were dealt as often as possible, it was two o'clock in the morning when openers were caught.

Brockway was the lucky man. The jack pot was then worth about \$2,000, and he had a pair of aces. He opened it for \$1,000 and Daniels stayed. Howe and Strange threw down their cards. Brockway drew three cards and caught another ace; Daniels held three kings. Brockway slapped up \$2,000 and Daniels tilted him back a like amount. Brockway saw the raise, and, filling out a check for \$5,000, laid it on the pile of bills in the center of the table.

"Brock," said Daniels, sharply, "I believe you're bluffing. I'm going to see your hand, anyhow. I call you."

Brockway laid down his three aces. Daniels crossed his legs, pulled his hat down over his eyes, said, "It's yours, old man," and knocked on the table for Andy to bring the drinks.

That was better than a \$10,000 winning for Brockway, but he did not let his elation appear. It was late, but nobody thought of going to bed. Lighting cigars, the players began another hand. Howe was lucky man that deal, and he raked in about \$2,000, to which each player had contributed nearly an equal share. Then the game went on without any one losing or winning any great amount until noon, when it was stopped for awhile so that the players could eat. The food was brought and spread on the table upon which they were playing, and as soon as it was swallowed the cards were dealt again.

At midnight the players took account of their chips and money and found that each had about the same capital that he began the game with. They had worked twenty-seven hours and had nothing to show for their labor.

"This is the funniest game I ever got into," said Strange. "We had a jack pot that it took us four hours to open, and now, after all this sweating and betting nobody's any better off than they were when the game started."

"Shall we quit?" asked Howe.

"Quit? No!" cried Strange. "I ain't going to leave this table until I've won enough to pay me for sitting here."

"That's the way I feel about it," said Daniels.

"I propose this," chimed in Brockway. "We'll

play the game until somebody is broke, and if anybody falls asleep or quits the game before that time, he's got to pay each of the other players \$1,000."

"It's a go," said Strange, and the others nodded their heads.

This put a fresh interest into the game, and it was played vigorously until noon. Twelve hours had been added to the session, which had now lasted thirty-nine hours, and still the original capital of each player had not been materially lessened. All of the players were sleepy, but none of them was disposed to take a \$3,000 nap, and they fought heroically to keep their eyes open.

Another twelve-hour lap was begun. By this time the news of the big poker game at McDonald's had reached the surrounding towns and men came in from every direction to see it played out. There was no railroad at that time running anywhere near McDonald's tavern, but several enterprising stage drivers ran excursions from the town to the tavern, and reaped a rich harvest.

In the forenoon of the next day Strange struck a streak of hard luck. He couldn't get a winning hand, and he chipped away until his funds were greatly reduced. At last he caught four deuces. He bet all he had in sight on the cards, and when he was raised he drew a check for \$5,000 and threw it on the table.

"I reckon that's a bluff," remarked Daniels. "I guess the hand is worth seeing, anyhow." He called the bet.

"I want to see a piece of that myself," said Howe, showing up \$5,000.

"I'm in it, too," observed Brockway.

There was something like \$30,000 in the pot, and Strange's four deuces were good. The turn in his luck woke up Strange, and he played a slashing game all through the day, but somehow the capital of the players was shifty, and would return to them.



And in less than a minute every man in the game was sleeping.

At six o'clock that night accounts were made up again, but there was no material change in the finances. The game had been running sixty-nine hours,

and the players hadn't had a wink of sleep. They were hardly able to hold up their heads, and they drank strong coffee until it failed to have effect.

For another hour the game dragged along in a listless way, because the senses of the men were so dulled by lack of sleep that they hardly realized what they were doing. Finally, Howe dropped his cards, saying, "I'll pay the \$3,000, boys; I'm willing to give it for a nap."

His head fell forward on the table, and he was instantly in a dead sleep, and in less than a minute every man in the game was sleeping like a log. They were carried to bed, and were dead to the world for twenty straight hours.

Howe paid the \$3,000 and said he did not begrudge a cent of it. He said it was the sweetest sleep he ever had in his life.

As it happened he was just about three thousand dollars ahead when he collapsed, and so was no loser. The game thus lasted seventy hours, and at its close no one player was out more than twenty-five dollars. As Strange remarked, one such game was enough to last a lifetime.

CHAPTER XII.

ABOUT BLUFFING—\$200,000 ON A PAIR OF TENS—A
BLUFF THAT TURNED INTO A FLUSH—MAJOR
EDWARDS AND THE TENDERFOOT.

The bluff is half the game of poker—some young players think it is the whole thing, until they learn from bitter experience. One of the painful episodes of a budding poker career is to go out on a bold bluff and be called down in an instant, or be raised out of his boots, and have to lay down ignominiously. After a while a fellow gets hardened to that sort of thing, at least enough to hide his real feelings, because no one enjoys being called on a bluff; whereas, the rollicking joy that overwhelms his soul when he gets away with the bluff is better than two pots won in a legitimate way. Perhaps the best plan is to follow the example of our German friend Fritz Vonderhannes.

"Vell, I dell you how it is," said he. "I dinks de way to pluff is to vait undil you gets apout dree aces, and den sock it to dem."

There is no doubt that it does help a bluff to have a little something to back it up, although there are players who claim that they can do better execution when they are absolutely bare.

A gentleman who is well known in society cir-

cles in New York recently sat in a little game at a dinner resort in Twelfth Street, and during the evening peddled out about twenty dollars on a half dollar limit.

He had beastly luck, but he was buoyed up by the feeling that things would eventually come his way, a feeling that other poker players have felt at times; in fact, many times. It was a jack pot, and the deal had gone around many times, but when the pot was opened he had his usual hand—five nothings. Yet he remained, feeling that this was his last chance.

“Five,” he said when asked to state the number of cards he wanted, and he was accommodated. As he picked up the first card he uttered an exclamation. With the second card he said, “Great Scott!” With the third “Holy Moses!” With the fourth silence and likewise when he accumulated the fifth.

It was not his bet, but he shoved in the limit at once, and had to withdraw it, because the opener wanted a chance. Then he saw the bet and raised the limit. The other players looked alarmed. Only one stayed and raised, and he only raised a quarter. The gentleman of the five-card draw again ventured the limit, and was astounded and mortified to have the compliment returned.

“I guess,” he said weakly, “you can take it.”

“The dickens,” said the other fellow, in an ag-

grieved tone. "I thought you had something. I have a full house."

And the gentleman who drew the five cards said, with dignity, "I can bluff on a pair of deuces, but when I have nothing I can't."

Very few people can now recall the notorious Sarah Althea Hill-Sharon divorce trial in San Francisco. Judge Terry, who was killed by Justice Field's bodyguard, Nagle, was Miss Hill's attorney in that case, and during the trial endeavored to have produced in court in evidence of Senator Sharon's maintenance of the plaintiff, the millionaire's check stubs. The effort failed, chiefly from the showing made by the defendant that the checks would throw very little light on the subject. Nineteenths of the private checks drawn by Sharon were payable to the order of "Cash," and neither checks nor stubs indicated the age, sex or social condition of "Cash." The fact was that nearly all of Sharon's private checks were in settlement of poker accounts.

Not that Sharon always lost at poker; he nearly always won. His total winnings in the Pacific Club were said to have been more than a million dollars. The play there was tremendously high, and there was a regular clearing-house performance after each game, each player settling with the others by checks, and it might happen that Sharon would draw a half-dozen checks after a game in which he was ahead.

He played a great game of poker, both in kind and size, but his immense wealth gave him no advantage because his antagonists were also multimillionaires, men like Ralston, the capitalist and banker, Senators Jones and Stewart of Nevada, Flood of the Bonanza firm, and that set of high-rollers.

One of the tales of the Pacific Club is of the night when Ralston won \$200,000 on a pair of tens. Five of the big fish were in the game and they were playing jack pots. Sharon opened and Ralston and two others stayed.

There was some light chipping of \$100 or \$200 several times around, when Ralston strengthened his play and began raising by thousands. Sharon and Ralston soon had the play to themselves, and it was not long before there was \$150,000 in the pot. Then Sharon met a raise with a \$50,000 counter. Ralston studied only a moment and then came back with a raise of \$150,000. Sharon did not take long to decide his play.

"I quit, Bill " he said, and shuffled his cards in the deck.

Ralston was so delighted over having made his bold partner lay down that he spread his hand, disclosing a pair of tens. Sharon never told what he held in his hand until after Ralston's death. It was a pair of jacks.

To go in on a bluff, and get beaten, and then win out after all, is a rather unique experience that could only happen to a newspaper man, so we will let him tell it.

"I'll never forget," said the Old Reporter to the Young Reporter, "one game of poker that was played at police headquarters when the reporters' room was a dirty, rickety, shabby hole on the top floor. Our great game generally began at 11 p. m., when the news was getting too late to telegraph unless it was very big. It was penny limit up to 12, then five-cent limit to 1 a. m., then ten-cent limit up to 2, then a quarter hour of jack pots with a twenty-cent limit.

"The usual quiet game continued on this occasion and at two o'clock I was two dollars out. Dollars were as big as stove plates to me in those days, nor, by the way, have they got over their inflated qualities yet. Then the jack pots came my way and I enriched myself with a few fat ones. Then I got wrecked on a couple of false ones and stood a loser once more.

"There was a slick crowd around that table, six being the limit of players. Presently one of the boys started a nice jack pot with a boost of twenty cents before the cards were drawn. I looked at my hand and saw four fat diamonds and a club, always a tempter. I should have come in and said nothing, but, you know how it is with a flush—

there are so many possibilities—I not only stood the raise but went twenty cents better. It went around that way until the first man hoisted it for another limit, and all stayed to me and I was fool enough to give it another lift. That scared all out but the first man, and he stayed.

“The cards were dealt. I did not look at mine, but when the other fellow raised I gave it a gentle boom for twenty coppers more. I was watching my antagonist and thought he was putting on rather too broad a grin for his conscience, but he raised all right. Then I picked up the card that had been tossed me, and it was the ace of spades.

“A bob-tailed flush stared me in the face. I was now out about three dollars, and, feeling nervous, I think I would have presented any man with fifty cents who would have been so kind as to kick me for getting into the game, but the devil took hold of me and I went in for a bluff. Well, sir, the other fellow assisted me.

“My hand for all he knew was good for a flush, a full house or four of a kind, but Jim (never mind his last name) was a bold player, and I did not know what to make of him. He was nervous all right, but I began to believe that the nervousness was a symptom of a good hand on his part and I began to shake a little myself.

“Under ordinary circumstances I would have dropped, but I was reckless by this time, and bor-

rowed a ten from one of the winners. The other boys began to get excited, and I think I got a bit excited myself as I said to Jim, 'Say, suppose we throw aside the limit.'

"He agreed and I planked down the ten. It was the first time on record that the limit had been lifted and the boys looked worried about it. Jim took out a yellow envelope, opened it and laid \$15

on the table, just one-half his salary. I did not mind that, for Jim had an income and was comparatively well off.

"I sat there, studying that bobtail flush and thinking how I could get out of the hole I was in.



"I took out my watch and said I would lay it against forty dollars.

Then I did a desperate thing. I took out my watch and said I would lay it against forty dollars. It was a present from a politician and cost a cool two hundred. I put it up as confidently as I could, but my hand shook and I knew that Jim saw that I was rattled.

“ ‘Old man,’ said Jim, ‘I know you are bluffing right through and I hate to take your money. I call you and I have three of the prettiest aces in the pack.’

“He laid them down, and a sickly feeling came over me as I thought of what I would tell my wife that night. Down on the table I threw my hand, and I cursed to myself, although I was by no means a cursing man. Then Jim gave a gasp and said: ‘Well, I’ll be jiggered! If you had not all the symptoms of a bluff, I’ll eat my hat!’

“I was in a fainting condition by this time, and only said: ‘Don’t get gay. Take the money and let me get over the agony?’

“ ‘Take the money?’ he yelled. ‘What in blazes do you think you’ve got?’

“ ‘Why, a miserable bobtail, of course.’ I replied. ‘Hello! What’s this?’

“I picked up the ace of spades, and saw the word joker on it for the first time. It was one of these jokers that are fixed up like an exaggerated ace of spades, and across the top was marked in pencil ‘deuce of diamonds.’ I had an ace high flush!

“Just before I entered the game it was discovered that the deuce of diamonds was missing and the joker was put in to take its place. I tell you I felt mighty mean over that pot, and did not want to take it, but Jim would not have a division. That’s the last game I ever played or will play, and I advise you to take warning.”

The Young Reporter said he would, but he sat in a game that night just the same.

Speaking of bluffs recalls a story that illustrates the old adage that there is an exception to every rule. It is the rule in poker that friendship ceases when the game begins. No matter how much preliminary chaff and chatter may go on before or during the game, the true player must steel his heart to the fact that the fellow on the opposite side of the table is his antagonist, and must not be shown any mercy. Of course it is all right to give him a loan outside, but any signs of leniency toward him during the game might well rouse a suspicion of collusion. Yet there are times——.

In the '80's when all Dakota was on the boom, the sporting fraternity held high carnival. The boom burst, or faded, or settled down into an enduring prosperity, whichever way you choose to look at it, but it was lively while it lasted. Not that everybody made money. Oh, no! There are some men who have an unhappy faculty of always arriving too late, or of landing on the back of their necks when everybody else is on his feet. Among this sort of driftwood was one Harry Charlton, from somewhere in the East.

He had about five thousand dollars when he left home, and by all rights he ought to have made a heap of money in buying and selling lots, but somehow he managed to always get the short end

of the bargain. The result was his pile steadily diminished, and when he finally drifted into Fargo, he was pretty well discouraged. After looking over the ground for a week, he concluded that he would go into some respectable business, say, a grocery.

He did not know anything about groceries except in a general way, but he had a thousand dollars and could get credit for as much more, and with an experienced clerk—well, you know how a man will persuade himself in such cases. So Charlton rented a store, paid a month's rent in advance, and negotiated for a fine stock of groceries.

While he was waiting for the men to fix up his store, he got acquainted, no difficult matter in those days, and among his new friends was Major Edwards, the well known newspaper proprietor of Fargo, who was known all over the State. Edwards gave Charlton a puff for his grocery store, and in a few days they became quite chummy. This was not to be wondered at since Maje—as everybody called him—was the soul of good nature and Charlton was a bright and educated young man, with pleasant ways.

As may be imagined it did not take Charlton long to get into a poker game; in fact he got into one every night. He was just a fair, ordinary player, but inclined to recklessness and not an adept at hiding his feelings. He would have been pie for a professional, and he knew it, but he felt

safe in following where Maje led; a man who would not cheat or tolerate any crooked work in others.

On Monday morning Charlton was to open his new store, and on Saturday night he was sitting at a round table with four other choice spirits, having a parting seance, because, although he did not say so to the others, he had told himself that really he ought to settle down into a respectable man of business, and leave such frivolities to men who had no stake in the country. And while he was about it, he enjoyed himself to the utmost.

The game see-sawed for a couple of hours, and then everything went Charlton's way. As the saying goes, if he drew to a steamboat he could catch a river. If he had been a professional he would have broken every other man at the table, but it was evident that he played more for fun than money, and a dozen times he refrained from pressing an advantage where another man would have been merciless. As it turned out perhaps it is just as well that he acted in such liberal fashion.

At one o'clock two of the players quit the game broke, and that left Charlton with Maje Edwards and Stanley Huntley (afterwards so well known as "Spoopendyke"), two of the best players in the Northwest. This is the place where he should have risen and quit also, but he held on. In less than a half hour he was sorry he didn't.

His luck seemed to have taken wings. It would

not have been so bad if he had drawn poor hands, but he kept picking up threes and flushes and even full hands, only to find that he was held over nearly every time. The result was that his winnings melted like snow in the sun.

It was a very painful situation and Charlton felt a cold chill stealing over him, to be succeeded by a feeling of exasperation, the very worst thing that can happen to a man who wants to win. He began to bet recklessly, and try to force his hands to win. Edwards and Huntley at first felt amused and then pitiful, and each hinted more than once at quitting but this only angered the young man.

Then there came the crisis. It was Edwards' deal and Charlton's age. Huntley came in on a pair of nines, Edwards had a pair of tens and Charlton a pair of aces. He raised ten dollars before the draw, and Huntley laid down. Edwards stayed, and he and Charlton both drew three cards. Maje caught another ten, and Charlton did not help his hand. Huntley, who was lying back easily in his chair, smoking a cigar and watching the fray, said afterward that he could read the fact that Charlton had failed to help his hand as easily as if the announcement had been written on his face. If Edwards did not read it likewise he must have forgotten his counting.

"Chip " said Maje.

"Ten dollars harder," said Charlton.

"Twenty more," retorted Maje, placidly.

"Charlton came back with twenty more, and Edwards after contemplating him for a minute out the corner of his eye, lifted the pot a single dollar.

"I advise you to call," he said, quietly.

"Not on this hand," said Charlton, with a great attempt at steadiness of manner. "I'm going to win enough on this hand to stock my new grocery store."

"And if you lose there will not be any grocery store," observed Huntley, smilingly.

Charlton gave a little nervous start but pulled himself together very quickly, and going down into his clothes, pulled out a wad that represented every cent he possessed, as he had paid out very little cash on his new venture. He counted off note after note until he had a stack before him.

"Raise you six hundred dollars," he said, boldly.

"Whew!" whistled Huntley, while Maje Edwards leaned back in his chair and looked at Charlton with a twinkle in his eye.

Charlton felt himself getting sick under that piercing gaze. He realized when too late that Maje had him sized up, and that he was beaten. At the same time it came to him with terrible force that his grocery store was going to be knocked on the head, or else he must go heavily in debt. It would have been a relief to have been able to kick himself for his freshness, but he bitterly told

himself that he would have plenty of time for that. Just now he had to keep a stiff upper lip, and take his medicine like a man.

It seemed an interminable time until Edwards did anything. He took a fresh cigar from his pocket, lit it, took a half dozen puffs, looked at Charlton through the smoke, and then said slowly, "When did you say the store will open?"

"Monday morning," answered Charlton, through his teeth, with an inward curse at what he regarded as playing with his feelings as a cat does with a mouse.



"Hum," said Edwards. Then he fingered his cards again, and slowly laid them on the table. "Well," I guess you have the better hand. Three tens are

"When did you say the store would open?"

generally good, but not to-night."

Then he threw his hand into the deck, arose and put on his hat.

"We might as well quit, Eh, Huntley?" he said.

Huntley assented and as they turned to go they looked back at Charlton. He had gathered the money into his pockets and had his chips in his hands ready to have them cashed, and he said nothing until he and the others went through that necessary performance in the bar room.

Then he got between Huntley and Edwards and said with a very unsteady voice:

"I'm a tenderfoot, but I'm not entirely green. I know just what you did to me to-night. Before I sat down I made a sort of vow that I would not play again, and now I'm going to keep it. But before I quit, I want to say that I never can express my gratitude"——

"Here, here," said Maje, hastily. "I don't know what you're talking about. Come along, Huntley. Goodnight, Charlton. Let me know when you get settled and I'll send a man down to write up your place."

CHAPTER XIII.

TOM CUSTER'S LUCK—A GIRL MAKES THE BEST DRAW ON
RECORD—HOW A TOWNSITE WAS WON ON TWO
DEUCES—LUCKY BALDWIN'S BIG PLAY

There is no end to queer luck tales in poker annals, which is not to be wondered at since poker is made up so largely of luck. The saying: "It's all in the draw," has passed into a proverb, although it isn't exactly true, yet it is true enough to tempt many a player to his ruin. Careful tables have been prepared showing what the chances are of catching certain fillers to pairs, two pairs, flushes and so forth, and we are assured that the player who studies these chances and plays accordingly, will win more than the fellows who play without any rule, and just come in because they feel like it. That may all be true, although I do not think the system has ever been tested, and everybody knows that the system player in faro is generally standing around the table looking at the other players and wishing some one would stake him. To put it in effect would be to eliminate all those delightful slices of luck that drag a man into the game when he has only a pair of deuces and he knows to a moral certainty that the other fellow has at least two pairs.

Captain Tom Custer, who, with his famous brother General Custer, was slaughtered on the Little Big Horn, was a dashing poker player. He played without any apparent style or reason, sometimes coming in on the most ridiculous hands—such as a nine and ten, or standing a raise on three cards of a suit, in hope of catching two more to make a flush—and he made them win often enough to cause remark. He used to make the remark, half true, that he would a little rather start out with nothing in his hand, because then he had a better chance in the draw.

The Seventh Cavalry was a great poker playing organization, from the general down to the private, and Captain Tom didn't miss many games, when he was off duty. He did not win all the time but the other players always knew he was in the game.

One night a party of four were playing, and Custer had been playing his usual reckless game. Finally it came to a hand where there was considerable at stake, Custer having raised two or three times with nothing in his hand. When it came to the draw he skinned his hand and found nothing better than the six, seven and ten of spades, the four of clubs and the jack of diamonds. He threw away the club and diamond and asked for two cards.

It is the rule in poker that on the original deal

if a card is faced the receiver must take it, but in the draw if a card is faced he cannot take it, but must receive another in its stead. He picked up the cards as they were dealt to him, and the first was the eight of clubs. As he reached out for the next card it struck his hand in such a way as to turn it over, and there lay the king of Spades!

Custer ripped out an oath, he was so exasperated at his bad luck, and of course gave away his hand in so doing. He got a roar of laughter in return, as another card was dealt him, which he received in sulky silence.

Then the betting began and when it came around to Custer he raised everybody. Of course he was chased up, but he kept coming until the others were forced to call him. Each man



Each was confident that Custer was bluffing.

had a stiff hand and each was confident that Custer was bluffing, out of sheer rage.

The instant he was called his expression of

gloom changed to a grim smile, and he laid his cards on the table face upward. They were the six, seven, eight, nine and ten of spades. After losing the king by mischance, he had actually caught the nine, giving him a straight flush!

That game ended right there, it being conceded that the devil himself could not beat that luck.

This, however, isn't a marker to the story of a girl's luck in the draw.

It was a rather long voyage from Rio Janeiro to New York on the old Brazilian Line, and there were only nine passengers in the first cabin on the occasion when this wonderful game occurred. Among them was a pale, delicate and very nervous young man who was accompanied by his sister, and a solid, phlegmatic individual of about fifty years of age.

About five days before the ship reached home, these two men got to playing freeze out in the smoking room. The game started with dollar stacks, just to pass away the time, as so many games start, but as the nervous man lost steadily he wanted a chance to get even, and they decided on a ten dollar limit.

Now everybody knows that a lot of money can go across the table in a ten dollar limit game if the cards keep running the same way, and if ever a man had a run of hard luck it was the pale, delicate chap. No matter what he held the solid man

beat him by a spot or two, and the worst of it was that the hands were always too good to lay down without a struggle. He had a queen full beaten by four fives, and a king high flush of spades by an ace high flush of diamonds. It did not seem natural that bad luck should run one way so persistently in a perfectly square game, but it did, and the game was square beyond the shadow of a doubt.

The last night out from New York the young man was out \$1,000, and there came the crisis, as it is bound to come in every game. And, as in so many other cases, it was a jack pot that started the ruction. This one started at five dollars and crept up and up with each deal, until all the chips were in the middle of the table, and still neither the nervous young man nor his stolid opponent could get openers.

Everyone of the cabin passengers was inside watching the game, but not one knew just what a state of anxiety that nervous young man was in except his sister, and she was about as much wrought up as he was. She would have been more so if she had known that the roll of bills that he now pulled from his pocket contained all the money he had in the world. The stolid man also produced a wallet from his pocket and laid it in front of him.

They kept dealing and passing for fully twenty

minutes, while every one was breathing hard and staring at the cards as if the fortunes of empire depended on the deal. The stolid man, however, was as cool as the conventional cucumber, and seemed to be perfectly indifferent as to what became of the mass of money in front of him. Finally the young man rose from the table on his opponent's deal.

"I have heard that there's luck in a new player," he said. "If you've no objection, deal this hand to my sister."

"Certainly," assented the stolid man; and the girl, her face flushed with excitement, took her brother's seat.

The stolid man dealt the cards and the girl, in the mincing way peculiar to women in parlor games, picked up each card in succession, and held them so that her brother, who stood directly behind her chair, and everybody else near by could distinctly see them. The first card was an ace, the second an ace, the third was a queen, the fourth an ace, and the fifth was an ace. Four aces and a queen and a thousand dollars in the pot!

"Open it," whispered her brother, "and play it for all the money."

She opened the pot for ten dollars and the stolid individual promptly raised her ten. He was raised in return, and the nervous man suggested that the limit be taken off. The proposition was accepted, and in an incredibly short time all the young man's

money, amounting to about a thousand dollars, was in the center of the table, together with an equal amount of his opponent's cash.

"Cards, if any?" politely asked the dealer.

The young lady, throwing her four aces exposed on the table, answered "Four," and quick as a flash, four cards off the top of the pack, lay in front of her.

No one who witnessed the scene will ever forget it. The young man only said "Oh!" but it was like reading a death warrant. Then, pale and trembling, he staggered to the door and went out on the deck, and it is a mercy he did not throw himself overboard.

Of course the girl had to take the four cards dealt her. She explained her apparent streak of idiocy by saying that in her excitement she had got the game mixed with old maid, and as the aces matched of course she had to discard them. This left her with the queen, and she seemed to feel dreadfully for a moment that she would be an old maid. When she had finished explaining, and looked around and saw the expression on the spectators' faces, she for the first time realized what she had done.

All the money was up by this time, and it was a show down, so the girl picked up the four cards that had been dealt her, and slowly turned them over.

There were three more queens among them! The stolid man held a small full and politely passed the money over to her. Then she went on the deck



Pale and trembling he staggered to the door and went out on the deck.

to find her brother, and he acted like a man saved from the gallows when she passed the money over to him. That was probably the luckiest draw on record.

In pretty nearly all these stories of big luck the hands chronicled are also big. As a rule, it is four aces or a straight flush that takes the pot; anything

less would seem to spoil the story. Now, as a matter of fact, the biggest stakes are very rarely won on big hands. Of course, a real big

hand, like fours of anything will generally get the pot, but there is more than likely to be nothing out against it except a pair or two, and the fours win no more than three little ones would have done. Then again it has happened very frequently that large pots have been raked in on very small hands.

Back in the '50's, when the northern portion of the Territory of Dakota was hardly more than a bleak waste of uncultivated ground, the town of Pembina was founded by Enos Stutsman, a man as remarkable for his eccentricities as he was for his physical deformity. He emigrated to Dakota from the huckleberry districts of Connecticut and located in the upper Red River Valley, where he filed and proved up on 320 acres of land, which was the ground on which Pembina now stands.

Stutsman had the head and body of a giant, but his legs were hardly more than a foot long, and he was unable to travel without the aid of two short and powerful crutches. He was a shrewd, calculating fellow and soon became a recognized leader among the handful of emigrants who had taken up their claims in his neighborhood. As a political diplomat he never had his equal in the territory, and for four consecutive sessions he was chairman of the council in the upper branch of the territorial legislature. He was also one of the most famous draw poker players in the territory.

Among Stutsman's close friends he numbered a pioneer named Judd La Moure, who owned a line of stage coaches running between Grand Forks and Pembina. The advent of the railroads killed Judd's coach line finally, and he settled down into a profitable grocery business in Pembina.

It was these two men who played one of the stiffest games of poker that was ever played in the Territory. The combat came off in the old Levee Hotel in Yankton in 1862, and it lasted from 10 o'clock on Friday morning to 3 o'clock on Sunday morning. During its progress the people of the town assembled in the hotel and watched the two men as they fought with the tenacity of bulldogs over the pile of red, white and blue chips. The legislature was in session at the time, and as Stutsman, who was chairman of the Council, refused to leave the game, that branch of the legislature adjourned until the following Monday, and the members watched the game to the finish.

Early in the game Stutsman's luck was wonderfully good and he played with a recklessness that surprised everyone. Later on, the tide turned against him, and the chips began to flow in the direction of La Moure, who sat with his slouched hat pulled over his eyes watching every move of his opponent. Slowly but surely Stutsman's chips went over to La Moure's side of the table, and work what trick or artifice he would, he could not turn them back.

Matters went this way until past midnight on Saturday, when Stutsman threw two \$500 bills on the pile of chips in the center of the table and called a \$1,000 bet made by La Moure. Stutsman held a king full on queens, and he felt pretty sure that the pot was his, but when La Moure threw down his cards there were four deuces.

At this display, Stutsman fairly gritted his teeth and exclaimed:

"I'm getting tired of this infernal run of luck. Judd, I tell you what I'll do. You've won \$3,800 of my money. If you put up \$3,800 more with it I'll stake the town site of Pembina against you, and will play for it in a lump to win or lose at one deal."

Judd accepted the proposition at once, and the two men shook hands to ratify the agreement. The news spread rapidly, and the crowd around the table increased to suffocation. After some more talk it was agreed that the hand should be dealt by E. A. Williams, of Bismarck, the speaker of the House of Representatives. The cards were to be dealt face up. When the five cards had been dealt each man was to discard and draw, the cards being thrown face up by the dealer as before, and when the hands had been dealt, the highest hand was to take the pot.

Excitement ran high as the deal began. To prevent trickery, although no one had any sus-

picion of foul play, Williams was seated in the center of the table with his legs turned under him like a Turk, in the full glare of the oil lamp that hung suspended from the ceiling. The friends of the two players crowded around the table and Williams was threatened with summary vengeance if he should in any manner manipulate the cards so as to give either man an advantage.

Deftly Williams shuffled the cards and squaring



The game was over.
Judd had won.

them slipped one from the top of the pack and laid it under La Moure's nose. It was a deuce of clubs. Stutsman caught the queen of spades. The next card

came off and Judd got another deuce. The four spot of spades turned up under Stutsman's nose and his brow wrinkled a little. Again the

cards fell and Judd placed the ace of diamonds beside his two deuces while the jack of spades looked up into Stutsman's face. Once more the dealer laid

down the cards and Judd claimed the queen of clubs while his opponent caught the ace of spades. Stutsman's face began to brighten. He saw the possibility of making a flush but the next card to him was a heart. However Judd had not bettered his hand and had to draw three cards to his two deuces.

Stutsman's friends tried to persuade him to draw four cards to the ace but he wouldn't listen to them, and discarding the heart, he drew one card, hoping to fill the flush. The onlookers were wild when Williams threw three cards to Judd. They fell face up—the queen of clubs, jack of diamonds and ten spot of clubs. He had not bettered his hand, and his opponent smiled grimly as he saw how severely fortune must snub him now if she failed to bring him a winning hand; for if he paired any of the four cards he held he must beat Judd's hand; besides, there was a possibility of his filling the flush. Judd, on his part, had evidently lost hope. He rested his arms on the table and doggedly watched Williams as he turned to Stutsman and slipped a card from the pack. All stretched their necks to catch sight of the card. It was the eight of clubs.

The game was over. Judd had won, and as he shoved his hand over the table to Stutsman the latter grasped it and shook it as if he had forgotten that it had played havoc with his fortunes. He

kept his word and deeded the 320 acres of land to La Moure.

La Moure sold a large portion of the land, and realized many thousands of dollars, especially when the railroads gave Pembina a boom. Stutsman died, in 1880, and was buried in the cemetery on the hillside half a mile north of Pembina. The only monument to his memory is the County of Stutsman.

A story of luck at poker would not be complete without some reference to Lucky Baldwin of the Pacific Slope, although, from all accounts, such happenings must have been ordinary occurrences to him.

Banker Ralston sat in this game, and the betting before the draw had been very heavy. All fell out but the banker and Baldwin. The latter had three queens, and, with that peculiar "hunch" which he seemed to possess, he sized his opponent up for three aces. Now, even with two aces it would be a difficult matter to bluff Ralston out of a pot and with three aces it would be impossible. He must outdraw him or else lay down.

Ralston drew two cards—he had three aces, as Baldwin had guessed—and Baldwin hesitated whether he should take one or two cards. Finally, he held up a king to his three queens, and drew one card. He skinned the cards in an anxiety he had never felt before and to his great joy beheld

the smiling face of another queen. He said afterwards that a woman's face had never looked so sweet before.

There was \$22,000 in the pot. Ralston had drawn a pair of jacks, making an ace full, and his face betrayed his luck. Baldwin meditated, hesitated, coughed, and squeezed his cards from time to time. It was a critical moment. He knew he had the banker beaten; the only question was how to play the cards to produce the most revenue.

It was Ralston's first bet. He thought a moment and then bet a single chip, which in this case meant \$10. Baldwin immediately bet \$30,000. Ralston eyed him in surprise, and started to raise the bet as much more, and then something caused him to pause. He fingered his cards for quite a while, and then called the bet.

Baldwin displayed his cards and raked in the pot. As he did so he remarked: "That was one of the luckiest draws I ever made, and one of the poorest plays. If I had raised you about a thousand dollars you would have come back at me with about thirty thousand, and then I could have given you a lift that you would have had to call."

"Yes, that is so," responded Ralston, dryly. "I am very glad you did not think of it."

CHAPTER XIV.

SIX CARDS IN ONE HAND—TWO GAMES WHEREIN SIX CARDS FIGURED—WHAT BECAME OF THE EXTRA ONE.

It is interesting to note the various ways in which players pick up the cards that are dealt them. One man will take them up one by one as they come, another will take them by twos or threes, and another will not take up the cards until all have been dealt. Then he will make a "book" out of the five cards, and squeeze the corners down apart carefully, evidently enjoying the prospect as it unfolds. To a man who is set in his ways in this respect, it is regarded as rank bad luck to depart from it. There is, however, a reason why the cards should be picked up in a certain way, and the preferable way is one by one. The reason is that it avoids the possibility of receiving too few or too many cards in a deal and of being ruled out on that account. One of the most painful incidents of the game is to get started in the betting and then discover that you have six cards. Before the draw it might be possible to get rid of the extra card, but after the draw it is only possible to lay down like a little man.

A Chicago drummer tells an interesting tale of

how six cards nearly brought him to grief, and it may serve as a moral warning to careless players.

"I was doing Wisconsin and Michigan for a hardware firm, and having a little fun on the way. By that I mean that I managed to put in a night here and there at the great American game. After a man has been on the road two or three years, covering the same territory, if he is any sort of a congenial fellow, he is bound to make the acquaintance of a half dozen good chaps in every town of importance, and they will make it pleasant for him on the occasions when he has to take the train at somewhere between one and three a. m. and it doesn't pay to go to bed.

"On one of these occasions I was in the upper peninsula. I had done the town, whose name I won't mention, because I don't want to cause any hard feelings, and I found myself with three hours on my hands, that there was no use wasting in sleep.

"The night clerk, who had to stay up anyway, was one of the party, and early in the evening he agreed to round up three other young sports with whom I had several tilts on previous trips, but as luck would have it, there was a sleighing party on the boards, and the young bloods were booked for an outing with three of the prettiest girls in town, and I couldn't blame them when they sent word that they'd see me blowed first. Of course

it wasn't any killing matter but I showed my disappointment, so the clerk suggested that he sound some of the transients, and thus make up a party.

"I assented, and along about ten o'clock the clerk and I were sitting down in a small room off the office in company with Mr. Close of Saginaw and Mr. Wilson of Duluth. These two gentlemen were probably traveling in Michigan in midwinter for their health—at least I never heard what was their business, and the clerk was no wiser—and were willing to devote a few hours to shuffling the papers, although they had to confess that it had been so long since they touched a card, that really, etc.

"I had heard that kind of talk before, and it always gave me a pain. It either means that the man is a fellow who doesn't know the first thing about poker, or else he is a clumsy sharper trying to throw one off his guard. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Close looked like a couple of tough lumbermen, just come into a fortune, coarse in appearance and speech, and I took an instinctive dislike to both. But I was in for it, and I couldn't very well decline to play with them after in a measure inviting them to meet me, so I drew up my chair with a cordial air, and we fell to.

"The clerk was a slow and careful player, who did not bluff, or get excited, or do anything but chip along until he got threes or better, and then

play himself even for what he had anted away. He never got any particular fun out of the game, and, in fact, he never played except to make up the game as on occasions like the one I am describing. Wilson and Close, I soon found, played a very stiff game, with plenty of bluffing, and yet changed their style so often that I soon realized that I was up against something more than ordinary.

"I wasn't kicking against their skill, because I've conceit enough to think that I can hold my own in fast company, and I had just about began to admit to myself that I was having a pleasant time when it dawned upon me that these two men were sharpers, and would fleece me if they could. I don't know what opened my eyes, but it came on me like a flash. They were not experts by any means, I made up my mind, but they would bear close watching.

"And watch them I did, and without much attempt at concealment, so that I felt certain that they could not ring in a cold deck on me, or slip a card. But you know it is a big strain to keep up that sort of thing for hours, and I was mighty glad to think that I didn't have to make a whole night of it.

"Well, the game went on without the sharpers getting in any of their fine work so far as I could see, until it came half past twelve, and then I suddenly announced that I could play only one

more round, as I had to take the 1:05 a. m. I saw them exchange a quick glance, and I wondered what they would try on. As it happened they caught me on a trick that was brand new to me.

"It was Wilson's deal, and I got two kings. The cards may have been stacked, but the deal looked fair enough. The clerk threw up his hand according to his usual custom, and Close stayed and raised before the draw. Wilson came back at him, and as I was between them they led me a dance for a few minutes. Then I was allowed to draw cards, and I asked for three.

"I watched Wilson closely, and felt certain that he took the cards off the top of the pack. He took them off in a bunch, and I received them in the same way, and placed them at the back of my two kings. I saw that Close got three and that Wilson took the same number himself, and then I waited to see what was going to happen, as I felt certain that something would happen.

"It was my age, and Close had the first say. He bet ten dollars. Wilson raised him ten. I pinched down my cards until I saw another king and then I lifted it twenty. Close promptly raised a hundred dollars, and Wilson laid down, with a poorly pretended oath of disappointment. It was up to me, and I knew that the dark secret was about to be revealed. And so it was!

"I peeled down my cards still further and disclosed to my delighted eyes a fourth king. Merely to give myself time to think I looked at the fifth card and saw an ace. That made me as solid as a rock as we were not playing straight flushes. I began to wonder why fortune was so kind to me, when suddenly I made an alarming discovery. I had another card! Wilson had given me four cards instead of three, and the way I took them I had not noticed the extra card.

"I could have kicked myself for my carelessness, and I had no doubt it was premeditated on Wilson's part. I hadn't more than thirty-five dollars in the pot, and I might have thrown up my cards, but it riled me to think that I had watched these fellows so successfully so long, and then to let them get away with me.

"It didn't take more than five seconds to think all that and then I came to a sudden resolution. I would meet trickery with trickery. I fingered my cards until I got the ace between my thumb and finger, and then while asking "How much?" I dropped the ace on my knee. Then I saw Close's raise and tilted it ten more. He promptly came back with another hundred.

"Then I began to feel sorry for myself. The ace laid on my knee in plain sight, and how to get rid of it I couldn't imagine. The men knew I had a sixth card, and would be sure to look for

it when it was missed. And here I was a hundred dollars deeper in the hole. And time was flying.

"It was a cold night, but it was warm enough in the room, because it was heated by a large box stove that burned wood, and the room was small. A few moments before the clerk had opened the stove door to reduce the heat somewhat, and I was so close to it that my foot almost touched it. I looked down again and saw that the ace had slipped down my leg and was resting on the tip of my boot.

"I never was a sleight of hand performer, but I did a very neat trick just then. Without turning my head, although I could see the card out of the corner of my eye, I tossed that card directly in the fire box, and then, without a tremor, I looked Close in the eye, and said:

" 'I've got you beat bad, but I have to catch a train as I told you, and besides this is only a friendly game, and I don't want to leave any hard feelings behind. So I'll just call that bet. What have you got?'

" 'Three tens and a pair of eights,' he replied, as he laid his hand face upward on the table.

" 'Four kings,' I said, briefly, and I exposed my cards.

"As I expected Close was on his feet in an instant, with Wilson by his side. I pretended to not see their excitement, and began to rake in the

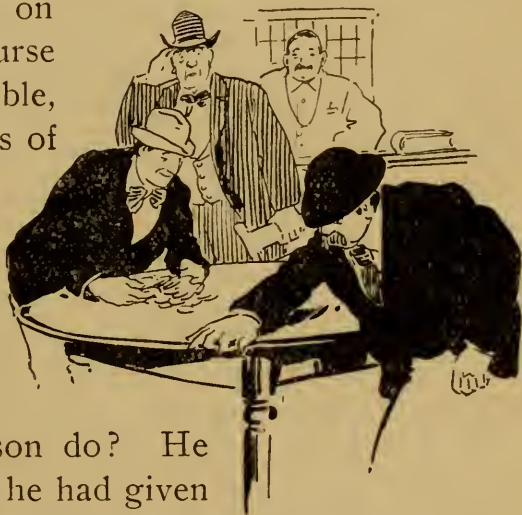
winnings. Fortunately I had the clerk on my side, and he was a big husky fellow, equal to three ordinary men.

“‘I think,’ said Close, ‘that you have a foul hand.’ He turned over the cards, and, of course, found only five. It was amusing to see the look he turned on his partner, and the embarrassment of that worthy.

“Then Close walked around to my side of the table and looked on the floor. Of course no card was visible, because the ashes of the ace were

smouldering in the stove. He gave another withering look at Wilson, but

what could Wilson do? He couldn't say that he had given me six cards, for that would reveal his perfidy. And there was the clerk, who wouldn't stand in for any foul play.



I pretended not to see the excitement and began to rake in the winnings.

“I tell you I enjoyed the situation to the utmost. The two men walked around and muttered and growled, while I tucked away the good money, and the clerk cashed my chips, and then I turned

to go. But I could not refrain from a parting shot.

"'Dorsey,' I said to the clerk, 'you should always see that the cards you furnish are straight. I have noticed several times to-night that the cards stuck together, and I was afraid that I might get too many cards in the draw. You ought to see to that.'

"Then I passed out to catch my train, several hundred dollars richer, and with the calm consciousness of a duty well performed. When I got back to that town on my next trip, the clerk told me that the two men had a monkey and a parrot time over the affair, each accusing the other of betraying him. The clerk, who had not the least idea what it was all about, listened in amazement, and of course could not give them any satisfaction. But when I told him what had really happened he expressed keen regret that he had not known it in time to help them out of the hotel on the toe of his boot."

Another story about six cards dates back to the early and halcyon days of Colorado, Nevada and California, when everybody was either prospecting for gold or speculating in real estate. Money was very plentiful, and much of it was spent with an abandon that would have done credit to the Count of Monte Cristo. Pretty nearly everyone gambled more or less and poker was the favorite game

from Ah Sin up to the bonanza kings. One of the best business blocks in Denver is or was owned by a man who laid the foundation of a big fortune with money won at cards, and many of the high rollers who have taken a hand in the games where he held cards have quit sadder but wiser by reason of their experience.

Even when Denver was but a small place it was the rendezvous for many skilled players. There was a banker living in Denver at that time, of the name of Cook, who had an abundance of cash, and who was a famous poker player.

He was also a rare good fellow, noted for his liberality. Jerome B. Chaffee, at one time United States Senator from Colorado, with two or three others who used to play with Cook a great deal, one night concocted a little scheme by which they figured they could have a great deal of fun at Cook's expense, and at the same time get a champagne supper out of him.

So Chaffee and his companions, who had plenty of money, and who had been caught in a good many jack pots that Cook had opened—and won—arranged among themselves that the very next time they played with Cook they would show him a trick he would not forget in a hurry. The scheme was to open a pot and if Cook stayed to deal him enough cards to make six in all and if he stayed on a pair he was to get four aces. Then, when

the pot had reached a goodly size, to call him, make him show his six cards, have the laugh at his expense, and after giving him back his share of the money in the pot, make him set up the champagne. It generally made Cook very mad to lose a pot of any considerable size, and they knew that if they made this pot a very large one his wrath would be very amusing to witness.

The day at last arrived, when they were all together in Cook's office, and Chaffee suggested a game of poker to while away the afternoon, which was a stormy one. Cook assented, little dreaming of the good time which was to be had at his expense.

The cards were dealt and the game went on for nearly an hour before the trap was sprung. Chaffee opened a jack pot on three kings. Cook stayed on a pair of jacks and called for three cards. He got four aces. It dawned upon him that something was up, but he did not quite grasp the situation, and when he did he was in pretty deep.

Chaffee had drawn two cards, and he bet the limit. Cook raised him. The others stayed for three or four rounds just to swell the pot, and then Cook and Chaffee had it back and forth. The betting continued until there was an even ten thousand dollars in the pot, when Chaffee called Cook and made him show down his cards.

Cook threw four aces and a jack on the table and

started to rake in the pot. The man who had dealt objected, stating that he saw Cook with six cards in his hand. The others added that they also saw Cook with six cards.

"Prove it, then," cried Cook. "I did not deal; you dealt, and if you gave me six cards, where are they?"

Chaffee and his companions at once inaugurated the most rigid search for the missing jack. They looked under tables, in drawers—everywhere a card could possibly get. They made Cook disrobe which he did without objection, and subjected him to the most careful examination, but the card could not be found.

This was a stunner. Cook had not moved during the game, and they were sure of the six cards, but where was the other jack? At all events it was not to be found, and Cook asserted he had but five cards, and expressed the greatest indignation at their doubts. He also held on to the money like grim death.

To say the would-be jokers were crestfallen would be putting it mildly. It was not so funny as they had figured out in advance, and for a week they vented their feelings by alternately laughing and swearing at the way Cook had turned the tables on them. To add to the aggravation, every time Cook met them he put on an injured air, as if he could hardly bring himself to forgive them for suspecting him of anything wrong.

Cook, as he used to relate afterward with great glee, got the six cards all right, but under cover of taking a chew of fine cut tobacco, of which he was very fond, got the extra jack in his mouth, chewed it to a pulp and swallowed it, tobacco and all. He said he guessed he could risk swallowing a chew of tobacco and a little pasteboard for ten thousand dollars, even if it did make him a little sick. At any rate, he thought the other fellows were a great deal sicker than he was.

CHAPTER XV.

POKER IN THE CENTENNIAL STATE—BIG BETTING ON SMALL HANDS—HOW THREE KLONDIKERS PLAYED CARDS.

There are plenty of stories about the man who held four kings and the man who came back at him with four aces, and kings and aces are the leading features of the poker-story teller's repertoire. It seems to be assumed that the average player will not bet his hand unless he has at least a full house. This will make an old poker player laugh. He knows that the toughest struggles are frequently over hands that do not arrive at the dignity of threes. It happens very often that an entire evening will pass without the appearance of fours, and if players waited for these big hands before they bet, the game would be a pretty dull affair. The fact is that there seems to be spells when the cards run high for a night, and then the next night they run low, but the playing runs about the same, because when the players find that small hands are winning pots they begin to bluff on pairs or nothing at all.

A Colorado expert sizes up the situation when he says that there is more genuine deviltry in two pairs than in aces out of two packs. And there

has been a mighty lot of poker playing in Colorado, and some good poker hands, but very few of the phenomenal sort have gone on record, whereas two pair or less have created consternation at times.

Poker is, and always has been exceedingly popular in the Centennial State. Perhaps faro is a little ahead, because miners are always dead set on faro, as it gives them such quick action, but then you can't play faro without a layout and considerable flummery, whereas you can play poker anywhere at any time.

The amount of stakes has cut a greater figure in poker games in Colorado than the hands held, and there are instances to prove this, ranging all the way from the man who bet his sleeve buttons to the magnate who put up his mine.

On the southwest corner of Blake and Sixteenth Street, in Denver, some years ago there stood—and may stand now—a two-story brick business block, bearing some evidence of the flight of time, yet still sound and solid, and capable of use for years. In 1870 part of the ground floor of this building was used by the First National Bank, and another part by Wolfe Londoner as a grocery store. Overhead were offices, and in one of these offices there occurred one evening in April a remarkable poker game.

The owner of the building sat in this game, and

opposite him was a then prominent Denver man. Both were prominent in fact since the owner held a high executive office in the Territory at that time. There were five in the game originally, but somehow they dwindled down to two. At 11:30 at night a large amount of money had changed hands, and things were going bad for the owner of the building. There was no limit, and his opponent had been putting the gaff to him in lively fashion.

Already there were four bank checks up, but the owner of the block would not be downed by hard luck, and felt confident that fortune would come his way.

He wanted to know if his building wasn't worth \$50,000 and was informed that it was. Thereupon he made a written agreement to sign it over, and the game went on. Within two hours he lost the block, and he transferred it the next day. It is said that the only recovery he made from the person who won it was at another sitting a week later, when he came out \$25,000 ahead. None of the hands held in this memorable game are on record now, but it is known that not one was remarkable.

This game is paralleled by one that comes from Leadville and credited with having been played there in the winter of 1882. The set-to took place in the Clarendon Hotel, and was participated in by two gentlemen who are still residents of Colorado,

and are both wealthy. At that time they had not much money but they had large prospects, and among other things there was a mine in which each had an equal share. The money was not much, at least not much in comparison with what they afterward possessed, but it was enough to make the game exciting.

And it was exciting. Hands run low, but they banged away at each other in lively fashion, and neither one got a pot without playing for it. Finally each got a hand that they evidently proposed to stay with. Everything went up—chips, cash, two gold watches, and, of course, bank checks, and it was only a question of time when they would get to the mine. Finally there came a pause.

“Have you got anything else, Charley?”

“How much is the mine worth?”

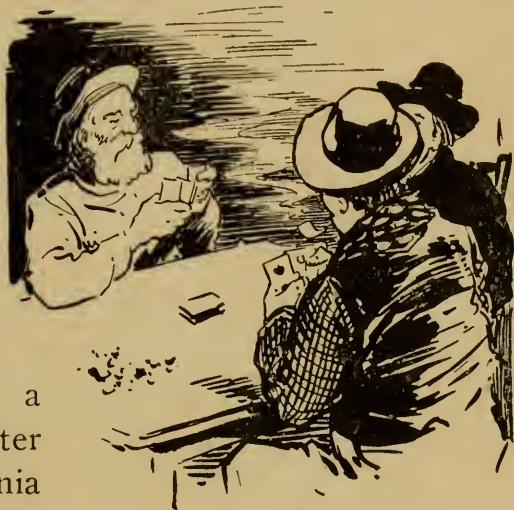
“I value my interest at \$10,000, and I suppose yours is the same.”

“Very well,” was the grim reply. “I raise you that.”

So the other interest went into the pot and there was a show down. Charley’s winning hand was three deuces, a four and a five. His opponent held a pair of aces and a pair of kings and a three. Certainly neither of these hands could be considered sensational, but they were considered good enough to stake a mine on. This mine, by the way, is now producing ore valued at about as much per month

as the entire property was worth at the time of the poker game.

In a game played in Denver one July day in 1884, there were four diamond rings, two watches, two pairs of costly sleeve buttons, a number of scarf pins and \$5,000 in money staked on one pot. In this game sat an ex-Governor, a well known smelter man, a California miner and an Eastern Congressman.



It was an old time miners' game.

The man from the East scooped in the pot on a small straight.

Six thousand dollars in nuggets was won by a lucky poker player in Denver in 1871. The nuggets came from Clear Creek, and were brought to Denver for the purpose of being placed in bank, and they got there but not in the way intended. It was an old time miners' game, with all sorts of bluffing, and it lasted all night. The end of it was that the man with the nuggets got three tens, and he thought it was a simply paralyzing hand,

and it was pretty good for the way the cards had been running, but the other fellow held three jacks.

In Santa Fe there is a record of a prominent business man giving a bill of sale for his stock of dry goods, groceries, etc., amounting in all to \$80,000. This bill of sale went into a quiet little game, but it was not lost, for the reason that no one could show anything excelling a king full, which the merchant rightly considered a good thing to cling to.

A rather singular game was one played at Denver about five years ago, at the Windsor. There were five men sitting in the game; a railroad man, an ex-Mayor, a lawyer and two prominent business men. There came a deal when all stayed in. One man drew one card, another two cards, and the three others three cards each. The man who drew three cards raised, and was followed up until there was \$18,000 on the table. Then the man who drew three cards bet \$10,000, and all the others laid down. Then it transpired that he had been running a beautiful bluff on two pairs, while the man who had drawn two cards laid down an ace full, and those who had drawn three each laid down in turn, four queens, four jacks and four tens. This story is vouched for by witnesses, but all the same it is pretty hard to believe. The only supposition is that the other players were paralyzed at the size of their hands.

An amusing instance of Colorado poker playing is reported as occurring on a stock train coming from a point in New Mexico to Colorado. A large shipment of steers was being made to this point and the owners of the cattle traveled in a caboose. Now there is only one result of four cattlemen traveling together in a car for any length of time, and that is a poker game. There is a great deal of beautiful scenery on the way up from New Mexico, but scenery is cheap and only made for Eastern tourists to look at, while poker is always interesting.

The game went on very well for a couple of days. On the third day the conductor going through the caboose during the afternoon, was laid out with astonishment at hearing the remark: "I raise you five steers." The man who spoke these words then laid five matches on the board. He was followed up with more matches, each one representing a steer, and thus the game went on. When the shipment arrived at Denver it was owned by two instead of four men.

There is a great deal of gambling on the Klondike, but not so heavy playing as there was in the old California mining camps. The Klondikers have a tough time of it as a rule, and, with few exceptions, every man is looking eagerly forward to the day when he can shake the dust—even if it is gold dust—of that region from his feet and rejoin

his friends in the haunts of civilization. Consequently he hangs on to every ounce that brings him nearer to the day.

But when the miner makes his pile, and escorts it safely to the outposts of hotels, theatres and all that makes life worth living, the temptation is almost irresistible to have a high old time once more. The temptation generally takes the form of cards, and as there must be losers where there are winners, it is not unusual for a man who has amassed enough for him to live on the rest of his days to drop it in Seattle, Portland or San Francisco, and then start back to the Klondike to make another pile. Some of the games played by these returned Argonauts are simply fierce, and make old timers open their eyes.

In August, 1899, there arrived at Portland three men from the Klondike—George Mulford, Parker Hamlin and Henry Smith. They had never met each other in the gold regions, but made acquaintance on the boat. Each had been very successful, having about a hundred thousand dollars apiece, and all the way down they told each other what they were going to do with their wealth. One was going into business in Pittsburg, another was going to live on his money in Ohio, and the third had a rosy dream of a fruit ranch in California. All had been poor men, and they seemed to fully appreciate the value of their hard earned money.

When they landed in Portland they went to the same hotel, and put in three or four days in fitting out with store clothes, and filling up on square meals, just to get into the habit of eating again, as Smith said.

They had resolved to leave on Sunday morning, and on Saturday night they had a farewell supper. After the supper they had a smoke, and then Mulford suggested a little game of poker, just for fun. They had never played cards together, but it soon developed that all were most stubborn players.

The game began mildly, with a fifty-cent ante and five dollar limit, and for an hour nobody was much to the good. As they played they drank, and perhaps that went to the head; at any rate, the limit was raised to a hundred dollars, and they began to bet recklessly. The excitement started with Mulford, who held two aces. He bet the limit; Smith stayed on two pair; Hamlin raised it the limit on three fours, and Mulford came back with another hundred raise. Smith and Hamlin laid down, and when they saw that Mulford only had a pair they swore at themselves for being bluffed.

The hands ran very low but the betting ran higher and higher. The limit was bet about every deal, and no one could get away with a bluff, because every time one player made a bet, the other two would call, even if they had nothing better than ace high.

Of course this soon got too tame, and finally the limit was taken off, and then the recklessness of the play was astonishing. On one hand Hamlin drew one card to a four flush, and bet five hundred dollars. Smith had a pair of sevens, and drew three cards without helping his hand.

"Five hundred dollars?" he said, eyeing Hamlin, keenly.

"That's what I said."

"I don't believe you made it," returned Smith. "At any rate, I'll just lift that five hundred for luck."

"One thousand more," retorted Hamlin.

"Call you."

Hamlin showed down a pair of deuces, with a laugh.

On the very next hand Mulford stood pat. It was Hamlin's deal and Smith's age.

"Pat, eh?" said Hamlin. "You haven't got a thing, and I know it."

"Five hundred says I have," returned Mulford.

"I wish I knew what you were going to do," said Hamlin, glancing at Smith.

"Well," said Smith, with a laugh, "in order to not spoil the fun I'll stay out this hand and let you two fight it out."

"Then I'll just keep these," said Hamlin. "Five hundred harder."

Mulford came back at him, and when there was

ten thousand in the pot, Hamlin called. Mulford had ten high, and Hamlin had queen high.

The betting simmered down for the next three or four hands and then Mulford started out on another cantico with a pair of kings. This time he put his foot into it largely, as Hamlin had three nines and Smith three aces. After contributing sixteen thousand to the pot, Mulford dropped out, and after another big bet Hamlin called.

By this time Mulford was out about twenty-five thousand dollars, and announced his intention of quitting. He also advised the others to do likewise, but Hamlin was also out some thousands and he wanted to get even, and as Smith was ahead he didn't care how long he played. So Mulford sat and looked on.

The two men then went at it as if all their previous playing had been mere practice. Hardly a hand was played that did not count up to two thousand dollars, and bets of five thousand were frequent. Strange to say the cards began to run higher than they had all evening, and that had a tendency to add to their excitement. Hamlin finally evened up his losses, and Smith then suggested that they call it off, but he wouldn't listen.

About 1 a. m. Hamlin was ten thousand dollars ahead, and then his luck took another turn and he lost rapidly. This had a tendency to rattle him and eventually proved his undoing. There came

a hand when he dealt Smith two queens and himself two fives. Each took three cards; Smith caught a pair of tens, and Hamlin the other five.

Smith bet a thousand, Hamlin raised it five thousand; Smith raised a like amount, Hamlin lifted it ten, and Smith again hoisted it ten.

For the first time during the game, Hamlin began to get nervous. He had been bluffing on



Smith gave a whoop of joy and threw his hand on the table.

pairs, and calling thousands on a high card, and now he had threes, but the more he looked at them the smaller they seemed. He was again out more than ten thousand and he had lost the last five or six bets. The poker player who goes into any such line of reflection might

as well quit playing, and Hamlin realized that, but he did not like to weaken.

So he did a very foolish thing. Next to calling

his best play was to raise it to the skies, but he raised it five hundred dollars. Smith felt certain he had him, and he bet thirty thousand dollars flat.

Hamlin looked at his cards and then at the man opposite him, who seemed very serious. He fingered his cards for fully a minute, and then said, hoarsely, "Damn it, Hank, you've either got four small ones or three big ones, and I'll pass."

Smith gave a whoop of joy and threw his hand on the table.

"Don't look at them," said Mulford, warningly. "It may make you feel worse."

But Hamlin insisted and when he turned up the cards he swore like a Klondiker for a minute, and then he laughed.

"Well, I've got enough to live on yet," he said, cheerfully. "I never weakened until I happened to think that if I kept on losing I would have to go back to that God forsaken country and dig up another fortune."

CHAPTER XVI.

CHILDREN AND POKER—TOO MUCH FRANKNESS—DADDY
AND DINAH—HOW THE TOM FOOL HAD
THEM “ALL ALIKE.”

They say that children and fools speak the truth, a most desirable trait indeed, but not of much use in a game of poker. For that reason it is just as well that both children and fools should be kept out when the festive game is in progress. The pure innocence of prattling babes is a sweet thing to the father and man whose days are spoiled with the sordid contact of commerce and the wiles of the world. Yet that purity of mind sometimes assumes such poignancy of penetration as to startle the fond father.

Such was the case of a bright four year old daughter of a Philadelphia gentleman, who when he is at home luxuriates on West Walnut Street, and spends his summers at Atlantic City. Owing perhaps to the exhilarating influence of the sea air, he always indulges in more or less poker playing during these months, and it is a matter of some envious notice among his friends that he almost invariably is a winner. In fact, the gentleman is just about good enough to make a living at the

noble game if his inclinations had drifted that way.

But there are occasions when fate gets a double nelson on him and he goes to grass. On the occasion in question this gentleman met three of his old college chums, and after indulging in personal reminiscences until the subject grew tiresome, one of the party suggested poker.

The game went on swimmingly for some time, and our friend was winning with his accustomed frequency. Then there came a jack pot, into which he plunged with great enthusiasm. At this stage his young and charming daughter climbed upon his knee, and was received with a fond embrace. Two of the players had dropped out and the third was wavering.

"Ten more," said the Philadelphia man, with a cheerful air of confidence.

The other man took a look at his two pair. They were as big as ever, but their importance seemed to be dwindling. He had them before the draw and hadn't helped them; his opponent had drawn three cards, and he was so infernally lucky——

Just at this point the angel child spoke up and said:

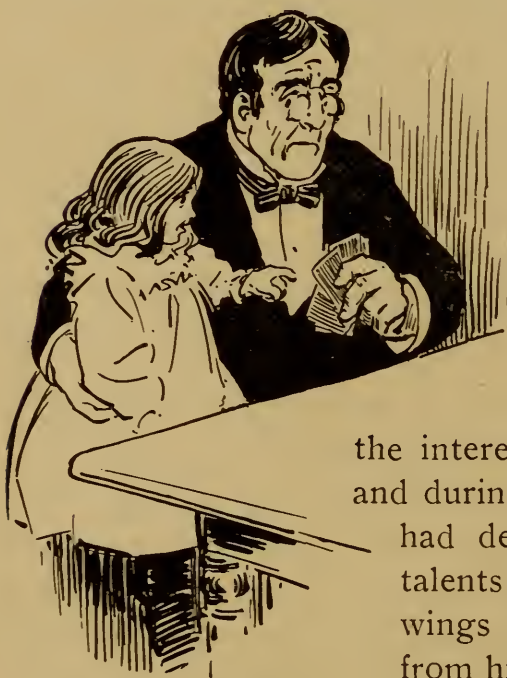
"Oh, papa, you have two mammas and one papa, and two cards with spots"——

"Raise you ten," said the man with two pair.

The child must have been astonished at the velocity with which she was hoisted off of papa's

knee, and the sternness of the voice that ordered her to "go to your mamma."

She went, and her papa did not call that raise; in fact, he was so unnerved that he was a heavy loser before the game ended. And the other players were cruel enough to give him the laugh.



"Oh, papa, you have two mammas
and one papa, and two cards
with spots."

Perhaps it was a cousin to this young lady—a youth of tender years, known as Augustus, who lived in New York. He also had arrived at

the interesting age of four, and during that brief period had developed so many talents that it is a wonder wings did not sprout from his shoulders. As it was his fame was blazoned even unto the dis-

tant family circle represented by the fourth assistant deputy cousins. Yet there came a time when the cherub fell from his high estate.

One Sunday the uncle of Augustus came to town to visit the father of Augustus. He had heard of

the heir apparent's mental luminosity and rendered appropriate homage to him, much to the delight of his progenitors. The lady, who had not hitherto had more than a writing acquaintance with Uncle George, expressed a high opinion of his intelligence.

When Sunday evening arrived the mistress of the house, who is a strict church member and a fanatic on the point of Sabbath observance, prepared to sally forth to evening service, but, strange to relate, her husband and brother-in-law suddenly succumbed to violent headaches.

Menthol and other remedies were freely but vainly used, and finally Augustus' mamma had to depart by herself. She left her husband in the library inhaling spirits of hartshorn and reading Fox's "Book of Martyrs"; while her brother-in-law sat in his own room with a towel tied around his fevered brow and an expression of intense suffering on his face. But when the door slammed the two men vanished into the library and locked the door. Augustus, alone and forgotten, roamed the halls.

At breakfast on Monday morning Augustus was more than usually scintillant and was given all sorts of opportunities to display his brightness.

"Now, Gussie," said his mamma, playfully, "tell me what papa and Uncle George did last night."

Papa and Uncle George exchanged looks, but felt reasonably safe.

"They wented into the library," chirped the prodigy, "and they flirted."

"What!" exclaimed the questioning one, while the two gentlemen felt the shadow of impending disaster.

"Es they did," continued the charming Augustus. "I heard 'em frew the door. Papa kept saying 'You're shy,' and Uncle George would say, 'No, I ain't shy.' And there was something as sounded like this"—he rattled his ivory napkin holder on the plate—"and once papa said, 'I'm Pat,' Papa's name ain't Pat; is it mamma?"

It was Dennis for some time afterward, and it is feared that papa will never think so much of his little Augustus again.

Black or white it is all the same with children. This little anecdote from Dixie will illustrate the similarity.

Old Daddy November always took pride in saying: "I bawn een Chalston befo' de wah, en I been lib yah eber sense. I lib clus to de battry whay Mohlan wof stan; a berr nice place fur hit, sho nuff, speshially een in de summer, kos een in de night, wen yo wuk done, you kin go sot on de battry en git nice, cool breeze."

On a very hot night in August the old man occupied his favorite seat, and thus discoursed with his friend Primus Green.

"Primus, is I ebber tole you 'bout de narrer' 'scape I mek on lass Fote ob July?"

"No," said Primus, "you ain't been tole me nuttin' 'bout 'em. What kine er narrer scape you mek?"

Daddy November held his hat between Fort Sumter and himself, struck a match, held the match behind his hat until he had lighted his pipe, and then he put the pipe in his mouth and his hat on his head. Then he said:

"Et bin befo Sambo Robinson bin dig rock een de fosfite mine on de Ten Mile Hill, en he bin wuk on truck farm, between de fawk of de road and de Fo' Mile House. On de Fote ob July Sambo had a kyard pahty wot consists ob fo' niggahs—ole Sambo hisself, en his friend Gawge Washinton, en me and Hendry Drane, wot sell chicken.

"We play monstous big game. You kin bet fibe cent ebery time. Well, Drane dole de kyards, en Sambo gone bline. I git two king, en ob cose I cum een. Washinton seen de bline too, en Drane kum een. Sambo mek de bline good en tek tree kyard. I tek tree, Washinton tek one en Drane tek tree.

"Wen I pick up my han' I mos turn pale. I ketch wun mo king en two jack. Sambo he lay low. bekase he em bline. I bet fibe cent, en Washinton he liff me fibe mo. Drane trow away he han' an cuss. Ole Sambo smole a smile en seen my fibe cent en Washinton fibe cent en liff em anudder fibe. I try ter look es if I gwine ter bluff, en I hab

my han on de chip fur to rise em agen wen some-
tin happen wot nobody ain't count on.

"Sambo got one pooty little granchile name
Dinah. De chile ain't but six year ole but she
know all de kyards. Dinah sot behin Sambo en
look on de kyard en jiss wen I gone liff Sambo
some mo, de little gal sing out, 'Oh, how funny!
Granpa got all de queens!'

"Ob course dat mek excitement. I trow away
my full house, Washinton fling fibe spade on de
table; Drane he laff—he cum in on two sebens,
en Sambo, who hab de queens sho enough, say
dam, en tun roun en slap de chile en tek her in de
nex room en put her to bed. Den wen soun kum
frum de room like spank, en Dinah holler, I sorry
fur dat chile, kase her talk seen sabe me at least
sebenty fibe cent. I mek narrer scape."

"En what Washinton say?" inquired Primus.

"Gawge Washinton say," replied Daddy No-
vember, "dat Sambo ain't no right fur to spank dat
chile, kaws she been tole de troof."

Three children are at least equal to one fool,
and this is the story of how a fool got away with
a wise man.

In the year 1880 there came to western Missouri
from Vermont a family named Hecker, consisting
of a man and wife and six children. What tempted
a Yankee to come to Missouri, and that section in
particular, no one knew except Hecker and he

never told. He first started in the grocery business, but soon found that he could not compete with the shopkeepers to the manner born, and within a year he failed and then took up farming.

He was not much more successful as a farmer than a shopkeeper, but he made a living, and that seemed to satisfy him. In fact he lost all the traits of his Yankee nature, and just shuffled along through life like his neighbors. In 1888 he died, leaving his wife and children to make a still poorer living out of the rocky farm.

The eldest of his children was a boy of twenty, then came four girls, and then a boy, named Zenas, aged fifteen, who was a mere simpleton. It was said that he was bright enough up to the age of six, and then something grew on his brain—that was the way his mother explained his affliction. He was both harmless and goodnatured, and the children very fond of him, because although a big fellow he played with them like one of themselves. In fact, the poor fellow was a general favorite in the town where he strayed occasionally.

In 1891 there came a change in the fortunes of the Hecker family. Some enterprising fellow discovered zinc and lead on the farm, and was honest enough to offer the widow a generous per centage on the output. The mine turned out to be wonderfully prolific and the result was an income to the Heckers that practically made them wealthy.

Fortunately, Henry, the eldest son, had a wise head, and he kept the family pride from swelling too much.

They moved into town where they occupied a comfortable house, the girls were sent to school, and Henry acted as his mother's representative at the mines. Zenas, of course, remained at home, and wore good clothes and also had more money than was good for him. He did not have a perfect idea of the value of money, but he knew enough to keep count, and make small purchases. His mother—like a mother—thought more of Zenas than all the rest of her children, and tried to persuade herself that he was recovering his senses, and that was one reason why she kept him supplied with plenty of pocket money. It was also suspected that Zenas knew other routes to his mother's pocket book since he occasionally flourished rather large bills.

On one occasion when he was known to have at least a hundred dollars with him he came into the leading hotel of the town and was spotted for game by a couple of the hangers-on. They were not exactly professional gamblers, although hindered more by lack of skill than scruple, but they had enough experience to be dangerous opponents for any ordinary country player let alone a simpleton.

The landlord's son, a boy of twenty, got Zenas into a side room and proposed a game of poker.

Zenas knew how to play casino and seven-up in a kind of way, so that he could tell the cards, but he did not know how to play poker. The landlord's son undertook to teach him the value of the hands, and after a little while Zenas announced that he was ready to play. Just at this time a couple of strangers happened into the room accidentally, to the chagrin of the three young scoundrels who were about to fleece the unfortunate.

They were guests of the house only arrived that day and did

not know Zenas, but noticing his open mouth and gawky manner, stayed to see the fun. When the game commenced, however, and they saw that Zenas was really



a simpleton, they exchanged

"I'll just stand behind your chair, my boy, and give you a few pointers."

glances, and one of them said: "I'll just stand behind your chair, my boy, and give you a few pointers."

"That ain't fair," growled the landlord's son.

"Maybe not," replied the stranger, "but we don't want the unfairness to be all on one side."

"Oh, let him do it," spoke up one of the other fellows. "This is only to teach him the game, anyhow."

There was no further remark, and the game began. It was ten cent ante, and Zenas came in on every hand. The man behind him made no objection to that, but he showed him how to draw to his hand, and also advised him when to call. To the surprise of the three young men, Zenas proved to be an extremely apt pupil, so much so that the man behind his chair began to think that his sympathy had perhaps been wasted, and that Zenas was not the fool he looked, so he relaxed his vigilance, and with his friend took a chair at a little distance and contented himself with an occasional word of advice.

The three amateur sharpers now felt more confident, and gradually began to absorb some of the fool's money.

On one of the hands, when there was about ten dollars up, Zenas turned to his adviser, and said:

"When they're all alike, mister, does that count?"

The man nodded his head, and Zenas pushed in ten dollars. The others glanced at each other and there was a general throwing up of cards. Zenas raked in the pot, and as he laid down his hand, the

landlord's son turned over the cards and disclosed three hearts and two diamonds.

"All red cards," said Zenas, with a grin.

The two on-lookers burst in a roar of laughter, while the others looked sheepish.

Zenas lost the next three pots, and the fourth he won on three kings. Then came a dozen pots in succession, which he lost, but all for small sums.

Then there came a deal when it was raised two or three times before the draw. This was a new feature to Zenas, and he had to have it explained to him at great length, and then it was evident that he did not like it. But he drew cards in a sulky way, and to the delight of his opponents he took four. The man behind him tried to check him, as he saw that he was discarding a pair of tens, but it was too late.

"He knows his business, mister," said the landlord's son, with a coarse laugh. "Board's the play."

"Yes, I know it is," said the man, "but I want to tell you right here, that this is the last hand you are going to play."

"Is that so?" asked one of the other players, with a sneer.

"Yes, it is so."

"Well, then, don't you interfere with this last hand," was the sharp response.

"All right," said the man, quietly.

The landlord's son drew two cards, the others three cards each. One of the fellows held two pair, the other did not help his pair of queens, and the landlord's son made a full house—three tens and a pair of eights.

It was his first say, and he started it at a dollar. The man with a pair dropped out, the other fellow raised five dollars. Now it was up to Zenas. He looked at his cards in a vague way, and then shoved in a bundle without counting it. The landlord's son counted it and found twenty-two dollars.

"That makes sixteen dollars raise," he said.

"Ya-as, that's right," drawled Zenas. "Only I wanter know"——

"No, you can't ask any advice," cried the landlord's son, sharply. "That's the agreement." Then he added, hastily, "I raise you ten dollars."

"But I wanter know," drawled Zenas.

"Shut up, I tell you!"

But Zenas wasn't to be silenced. Holding his cards all hunched up, he wriggled around on his chair, and seemed on the point of bursting into tears. And then he broke out in spite of the agreement:

"Say, mister, I've got four cards all alike, and"——

"Say!" The landlord's son was on his feet, blazing with wrath, but the stranger held up his hand soothingly.

"A bargain's a bargain," he said, laughingly. "My friend, you'll have to go it alone this time."

Zenas looked at his new friend and then at his companion, but their faces were blank. Then he fingered his cards for a minute, and then he went down into his trouser's pocket and brought up a bundle of bills. He took away a dollar bill from the roll, and dropped the rest on the table.

"I've only got that much," he stammered.

The landlord's son pounced on it.

"There's forty-two dollars here," he said, trying to speak carelessly. "Do you want to raise thirty-two dollars?"

"I suppose so," was the hesitating reply.

"Cut it down half," suggested one of the men looking on.

"No, I won't," said the landlord's son, doggedly. "It's his money, and we'd give him ours if he won it."

He had to rake up every cent he had, and borrow ten dollars from his friends to call the bet. As he did so the men who had been looking on, stepped up behind Zenas.

He did not understand at first that he had been called, and it was with some difficulty that he was persuaded to deposit his cards on the table. Then he slowly disclosed four kings!

There was a chorus of oaths and howls of rage from the amateur sharpers, and there is no doubt

that they would have taken the pot by force if it had not been for the presence of the strangers.

"Good boy!" shouted one of them. "Four of a kind, sure enough! Well, it takes a fool to speak the truth."

And the town fool walked away with the money, and, as the strangers took care to tell the story, the sharpers never got it back.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE POLICE AND THE GAMBLERS—A DOWN EAST SELECT-MAN—A BUNKO GAME AT LOS ANGELES—STORY OF THE SHORT-CARD MAN.

The police are always at war with the gamblers—quite properly—but they are not always successful in keeping them within bounds. It is necessary to get undeniable evidence, and that is not readily obtainable, so the guardians of the morals as well as the peace of the community must get it themselves. This is not so easy as it might appear.

There are two methods—strategy and force. In Cincinnati not long ago there came vigorous complaints of a poker



The officers walked into the various traps set for them.

game that was anything but on the square, so it was determined to raid the house. As usual the

managers of the place received a tip and prepared to give the police a hot reception. They filled the rear yard and hallway with boxes, beer kegs and other stuff. Barbed wires were strung so that officers scaling the fence would become entangled in them, and the cellar way was partially filled with sticks of timber and the door left open.

The officers came as expected and walked into the various traps set for them. They were shamefully cut and torn by the wires and bruised by falls over obstructions in the yard. Every uniform was ruined. When the police were in the midst of their struggles the gamblers who had been watching, gave them the laugh and fled. One veteran sport who was with the party didn't laugh.

"John," he said to the head man, "this isn't so sharp a trick as you think. The police are only doing their duty and you have no right to personally injure them. They will remember it against you, and if you undertake to open up another game in this town they will never give you a moment's peace."

The boss laughed again, but he realized to his sorrow that the old sport knew more than he did about poker and police. He opened up three times in succession and every time he was pulled before he had a chance to make a winning.

The other way is to resort to strategy, and the process is always about the same. Detective Bern-

stein is informed that a crooked game is in progress at such a number on Clark Street. The place is called the Kalamazoo Club. It is understood that the club is open only to members, but Bernstein is not only permitted but invited to visit the place.

He goes to the house and tells the custodian that he has an appointment to meet Harry Brown there. The name was a creation of his mind, but he is promptly invited to go up stairs and wait for his friend. When he reached the third floor he saw a complete poker layout—table, cards, chips and players. There was a vacant chair at the table, and he was asked to take a hand in a fifty cent limit game. He declined and said that he must see Brown. After watching for a time, he concluded to leave, but promised to return.

The next night he came back, and he was assured that he had missed a good thing by not remaining the previous night. Then he took a hand, and purchased three stacks of chips for five dollars. At first he won a considerable amount, and then the luck went the other way, and his winnings dwindled down. A jack pot was opened by the detective with three queens. The others stayed. Cards were drawn the detective taking two, while the others stood pat. On the first raise Bernstein prudently threw up his hand.

Two or three more hands were played and then

he got a king full. He thought that was pretty good, and decided to win or lose on it. He went broke, because one of the other players had four tens. This satisfied him. He left, and the next day had a warrant sworn out for the place.

The trouble with that kind of strategy is that the detective is always at a disadvantage when it comes to testifying on trial. It is very easy to make a point with a jury that he only complained because he lost; if he had won he would have kept on going there and pocketed his winnings. Then again, it doesn't follow that the game is crooked because a man loses. Perhaps he is not a skillful player. When an officer of the law makes a big winning at a gambling game and then informs the authorities, his sense of justice cannot be called into question, but where is the case?

A summer tourist describes a scene in a New England village. About a table sat three strangers who had started a friendly game of poker by roping in the usual country jay. After an hour's play they had fleeced their victim to the tune of \$40. He was good natured and did not growl and the game continued.

The scoundrels showed no mercy. They did not let their victim win even a few dollars to encourage him but either stacked the cards or whipsawed him until he was compelled to drop. At the last pot the jay was \$65 loser.

"Have you had enough?" asked the leader of the gang, rising with a smile—and his winnings.

The jay's countenance immediately underwent a marked change. He had every appearance of a man consumed with virtuous wrath, as he drew a revolver out of his pocket, and said:

"Gentlemen, I am one of the selectmen of this town. You may consider yourselves under arrest."

The gang, thunderstruck, was led to the lock-up where it rested for the night. On the following morning the sharpers were brought before this same selectman. The constable had searched them and the contents of their pockets were placed on the table.

"Gentlemen," said the selectman, suavely, "you are charged with gambling and obtaining money by fraud. What have you to say?"

"Only this," replied the leader of the gang. "You were gambling just as much as any of us, and if we have broken the law so have you."

"Not at all," responded the selectman, with an extremely judicial air. "I was gambling merely to collect evidence. However, if you wish to make a test on this point I will remand you for trial."

"We would rather have it settled here," said the prisoner, hastily.

"Then," said the selectman, calmly, "the sentence is a fine of fifty dollars each or thirty days in the county jail."

They paid their fines, and the money went to the State—or to the selectman. Next day the jay was at the hotel ready to be taken in again.

The “squealer” is a frequent figure in court. He has to be taken into account, although he is a contemptible character. He is invariably a fellow of low cunning, who has the instincts of a cheat, and when he sits into a game, whatever it may be, he has formed a plan to cheat the other fellows. The result is that he is cheated, and then he roars like a stuck pig, and runs for help to the police. He is the same fellow who goes to town to buy a stock of counterfeit money, which he intended to work off on his friends and neighbors, and when he finds that he has given good money for a lot of sawdust, invokes the protection of the law that he has been endeavoring to violate. There need be no pity for the biter when he gets bit, but we can afford to drop a tear for the honest fellow who is taken in by the bunko poker player.

One of the most striking instances of a hair raising bunko poker game occurred in Los Angeles, and the funniest part of the whole story is that, with three men working him, the victim himself proposed the game and introduced the three steerers to each other, all of which was part of the play.

The gentleman was a merchant from the East, who had come to California for a year's stay to

benefit his health. He was extremely wealthy and also sportively inclined, although all his knowledge had been gained among gentlemen like himself, so that he had no suspicion of evil. To the hotel there came a man representing himself as an official of the Canadian Pacific railroad, who had been East on business and was now on his way to San Francisco. The Eastern gentleman soon made the acquaintance of the railroad man and for two days the pair chummed together.

Another guest arrived from Chicago, who also made known the fact that he was destined for San Francisco. Anxious to make things pleasant for his friends the old gentleman introduced one stranger to the other, seeing that they both intended remaining at the hotel over Sunday and then going on to San Francisco. The newcomer was in the boot and shoe business.

Soon there was another arrival, and he proved to be a high roller. He was a stockman returning to his ranch from market, and he had a roll of bills as big as his head. He ordered everything of the finest and hardly ever flashed forth anything less than a tenner. It did not take him long to get acquainted with the old gentleman, in fact, he got pretty well mixed up with every soul about the place before he had been there a night—all but the Canadian Pacific man and the boot and shoe dealer. When he did meet these two worthies it

was through the medium of the genial gentleman from the East.

With such good fellows around him the only outcome could be a poker game, and soon it was going. The railroad magnate did not know much about the game, the boot and shoe man hoped it would be a small limit, and the stockman did not care how high it went—the higher the better for him, he said.

So it started. It opened at three o'clock Saturday afternoon and was still going at 9 a. m. the next day. Then it ended. The old gentleman was out \$1,700 in cash and \$40,000 in checks. The stockman had not a dollar of his big roll left, which was easily \$10,000, and he, too, had given checks for more than \$25,000. The game had simply been a ripsnorter and everything went.

It was the stockman who threw up his hand. He said he could not stand it any longer. The three agreed to give him a revenge game after dinner, and so the matter rested for a time. When the old gentleman had taken a much needed nap, and had his dinner, he was handed a note signed by the railroad magnate, expressing regret that a telegram had been received necessitating his going to San Francisco without delay, and that the boot and shoe man had decided to accompany him.

With the wings of a bird the gentleman from the East flew to the apartments of his fellow suf-

ferer, the stockman, and related the facts within his knowledge.

"Bunkoed!" cried the stockman, and added much more vigorous language to support his opinion. "I tell you," he wound up, determinedly, "I am not going to stand it."

"What can we do?" asked the old gentleman, helplessly.

"We can't believe that mes-

sage," returned the stockman. "Like as not they have not left the city. We will put the police on their trail for one thing, and then we will telegraph to the banks where we have

given checks stopping their

payment. Here! You needn't bother yourself; I've had experience with sharpers before. Give me a list of your checks, and I'll do the telegraphing."

He dashed out of the hotel, and when he came back he assured his friend that everything had been done in proper shape.



"I hope you do not suspect that I knowingly introduced you to these scoundrels."

"Now," said he, knowingly, "let us wait until to-morrow, and we will save all that money and most likely bag our game."

"I hope," said the old gentleman, timidly, "that you do not suspect that I knowingly introduced you to these scoundrels?"

"Certainly not, certainly not," replied the stockman, heartily. "My dear sir, no matter what may be the outcome of this affair, I absolve you of all the blame."

Monday morning there was another surprise awaiting the old gentleman. The stockman was missing. The old gentleman went to the police headquarters and the telegraph office, and found that no information had been lodged or telegrams sent. The stockman had been in the game bigger than any of the trio. His roll had been good only for a hundred or so, the balance being counterfeit, and he had remained behind to keep the old gentleman off the trail while his pals got a good start. The victim stopped the checks on all the distant banks, but he never saw his cash again.

There is a clever story told on one of the prominent railroad officials of Georgia, who sat down to shear and rose up shorn. He went to New York to attend a meeting of the Southern Railway and Steamship Association, and through the introduction of several high officials was led into a "society" game of poker.

There was a president of an insurance company in the game, who sat in only to fill up, as he was not a regular player, and the other three were society bloods, who were more used to dancing than card playing. When the game started the railroad man remarked that it wasn't a fair show for the others.

"You know," he said, apologetically, "that everybody down South plays poker; it's like mother's milk to them, and that gives me a big advantage. However, I'll promise to not play tricks."



His companion leaned up against the nearest lamppost and laughed until he cried.

Of course this was said more in fun than by way of boasting, but before the evening was over he wished he had kept his mouth shut. He played in the worst kind of luck, because he held good hands, such as warranted high betting, always to be defeated by the better hands of his society opponents. The insurance man simply chipped along, with only an occasional call, and put in the rest of his time making humorous remarks about the superiority of the southern style of poker playing.

Finally he caught a pat flush, and he deemed himself lucky, as it came at a time when he had but thirty dollars left. There were good hands all around, and repeated raises, which made the railroad man feel so much the better. But before it came to the actual betting after the draw his money was all gone, and he had to play his face. Then it came to a show down, and to his horror the young man on his right held four nines.

He rose from the table and offered an humble apology for his remarks at the beginning of the sitting, and nobody was unkind enough to laugh. But when he and his insurance friend got outside, and he was obliged to ask for money to pay his hotel bill, his companion leaned up against the nearest lamppost and laughed until he cried.

There is one thing to be said in favor of the professional gambler. He is game. When the sucker undertakes to skin the supposed innocent

and finds that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing, he wants his money back, but when the gambler finds that his schemes have miscarried, he lets it go at that, and rarely whimpers, although he may tell about it as a good story.

"Yes," said the short-card man, with a grin. "John is a good fellow, but he's got a heap to learn about the game of poker. Now, for instance, I met him the other night, and he proposed a little game. I was needing money that night and I fell in with the proposition gladly. John has plenty of stuff, and he does not hesitate to bet it as well as he knows how. I figured that with him and me

playing a nice, sociable two-handed game, the element of chance would vanish, and I would be reasonably sure of getting what I wanted.

"We sat down and I played square

for awhile. Luck ran about even. Neither of us had lost or won anything. We piked along for an hour or so, and then I thought I might just as well wind the whole thing up.



"Hold on there," said John, and my heart turned to stone. "I've got four aces."

"It came my deal and I fixed the cards. I gave him three aces on the go-in, and took four kings myself. You know how these amateurs are—they think there is nothing bigger than three aces. I figured that with his knowledge of the game he would bet till the cows came home on those three bullets.

"John's eyes bulged out when he saw the three aces, and he gave it a good lively tilt. I came back at him, and there was a large wad in the middle of the table when the draw came. John allowed he would take two cards. I took one, for the looks of the thing, and it was his age. I bet ten, and he came back with twenty. We kept on until every cent I had was on the cloth, and John had shoved in his watch.

"I admired his nerve, but as I was fixed I couldn't afford to be sorry for him. He rustled around and got valuables enough to call my last raise. I laid down the four kings I had all the time, and began to rake in the pot.

"'Hold on there,' said John, and my heart turned to stone. 'I've got four aces.'

"And," continued the short-card man, reflectively, "I'll be cussed if he hadn't caught the other ace in the draw, and I was broke for a month. Nobody but a novice in poker would have been guilty of a draw like that, when the cards were all fixed to beat him. No, no; John can't play cards."

CHAPTER XVIII.

SUPERSTITIOUS PLAYERS—QUEENS AND TENS—LOUIS
LAID THEM DOWN—EUCHRE AND POKER—
AN OLD STORY.

There being so much chance about cards of course there is superstition among players. It has been said that all players are superstitious, and that may be true but certainly not to the same degree. Some are to such a ridiculous extent that it utterly ruins their game. The man who must have his seat just so, must not meet a cross-eyed man, or must meet a man with a hump, and can't play unless a dozen crotchety notions are complied with, is not likely to play a good game once out of fifty times. A man must recognize that most of his success comes from his own endeavors or else he might as well shut his eyes and bet at random. Of such capers as walking around your chair to change your luck, spitting over the left shoulder, changing your seat, and lots of other simple tricks, even the wisest of poker players have indulged in them, but more for fun than with any fixed belief in their efficacy.

There are other matters, however, in connection with poker, in which superstition plays a prominent part. Most poker players also indulge in faro, and

will have noticed the system players—in fact, may be one themselves. One man believes that the cards always play out the way they started, another thinks they must break even, one will always play the face cards open, and it is a maxim with the majority to never copper the ace on the last turn. No amount of breaking will convince a system player that he is wrong—it is always something else that broke him. The faro dealer likes to see the system players in front of him; they support the bank.

Poker players do not go to those extremes, but many of them have funny notions about cards. I have met gamblers who would go broke on three aces. They acknowledged that there were plenty of hands in the pack to beat three aces, but they contended that the hands wouldn't be out at the same time. I have known men who maintained that they never had three aces beaten, although they had seen them beaten many times when held by other men. Other men admitted that they had had three aces beaten but only on rare occasions; not enough to shake their faith in the rule.

Nearly every old player has some such superstition. He has a pet hand; one which, if he will not exactly go broke on, he will bet fiercely and confidently. For this very reason no doubt the favorite hand frequently wins. The man who believes that three aces are invincible is apt to bet

them as if they were four, and carry dismay to his opponents.

I have met two players who believed that queens and tens were invincible. The men were not in the same town, by the way, and never met so far as I know. One man admitted that he had been done up on the hand once or twice, but the other man was adamant. This latter was a Frenchman of Bismarck, Dakota, locally known as Louis.

This was twenty-five years ago, when Bismarck had been busted by the collapse of Jay Cooke, and had not started on the return trip to prosperity. When the railroad had entered the town in 1873, it was a red hot place. Everything was wide open, and there was lots of money.

When Jay Cooke failed the railroad stopped, the railroad men left town and the gamblers soon followed. Pretty near all the money went with the gamblers and for the next five or six years it was the queerest sporting town on earth. There was all the inclination, but the means were lacking. Everything was wide open, and practically everybody played but there was so little money in town that plunging was out of the question.

Across the Missouri River was Fort Abraham Lincoln, where was stationed the Seventh Cavalry under the famous Custer. Of course, that was a source of supply. The soldiers on and after pay day drifted over to Bismarck and dropped a few;

but they were pretty fair players themselves, and just as liable to carry away a bundle as leave it. The Coulson Line of boats plying between Yankton and upper Missouri points, dropped a passenger now and then who had a few dollars, and occasionally somebody with money wandered in from an Indian reservation. Hardly any one came into town to settle, and the transients did not stay long enough to get acquainted. Then there came occasionally a post trader or Montana freighter who wanted to blow in about five hundred dollars in three days, dance on the billiard table, shoot out the lights and break mirrors, and otherwise let off steam.

It was quite a happy family of busted sports, all too sharp to prey on each other, and with no one else to prey on. So they played with each other, on the square and just as fiercely as if there were thousands at stake instead of five dollar bills. To this colony Louis belonged.

He was a painter by trade, but there were very few painting jobs in Bismarck, so he must have eked out a living by some other means. He was an occasional poker player, and really a good one, because he was cool, good natured, courageous and knew the value of a hand. His only fault was that he did not play out his luck. When everything seemed to be going his way, he would get up and cash in his chips, and jump the game. The

other fellows agreed that a man who would throw away his luck when he had it would end up in not having any.

Louis was the man who believed in two queens and two tens. He never referred to the subject except when he won a pot on his favorite two pair, and then he would say: "There they are. I tell you, boys, you can't beat them."

Then the boys would sneer or wink at each other, and privately wonder how a man could be so simple, although every mother's son had a pet superstition of his own.

One night Swede Pete opened a jack pot on two queens and two tens. Everybody stayed and on the final show down everybody had him beat.

"Now look at that!" he said, indignantly. "I just thought I'd give Louis' hand a whirl, and see where it's landed me."

"That's all right," said Louis, tranquilly. "I never said they would win for everybody; only for me."

One night some time later Louis was in a game, and the boys put up a job on him. They couldn't have done it except for the fact that Louis had struck a good piece of painting, and was flush. Being in more than his usual good humor, he tucked away three hot Scotches in the course of the evening, which, not being his ordinary tippie, made him rather hazy. He was keen enough,

however, to keep ahead of the game, but when one of the boys treated him to a fourth drink of the same he was rather silly.

The hot Scotch was brought in on a tray, and underneath was a cold deck. It was Pete's deal and Louis got his favorite two pair. Pete took three kings and a pair of sevens himself, as a wise precaution lest Louis should draw another queen, as he had been known to do occasionally.

Louis betrayed no emotion on seeing his favorites; firstly, because he was too good a player to give himself away, and secondly, because he always took his favorite hand as a matter of course.

There was no raising before the draw, and Louis took one card. Pete stood pat, and the other three players dropped out promptly.

"You don't want any, eh?" said Louis.

"No," replied Pete, in a loud voice, and in a blustering way, trying to make it appear that he was bluffing. "I guess these are good enough."

"Well, it's your bet."

Pete laid his cards down, and then with great care counted all his white chips, then all his red ones, and then all his blues. He shoved them all up into the centre of the table, and looked at Louis defiantly.

Louis looked at his cards, then gazed up at the smoky oil lamp that hung from the ceiling, and then fixed his eyes on Pete.

"I wonder what you've got," he said, dreamily.

"Got you beat," said Pete, briefly.

"Well, I don't know but you have," drawled Louis.

Then he wrapped up his bills, put them in his pocket, stacked up his chips, and called to the barkeeper to cash them.

"Ain't you going to call?" demanded Pete, not trying to hide his amazement.

"Haven't got anything to call on," said Louis, as he arose to go.

"Why, you——"

The other three howled with laughter at this give-away, and Louis smiled amiably.

"Two queens and two



"Queens and two tens," he said, slowly, "never were beaten in my hand—in a square deal."

tens," he said, slowly, "never were beaten yet in my hand—in a square deal."

Then he walked out, and no one could ever get him to explain whether he suspected the trick or really weakened on his favorites. But it was noticed that he never played them quite so strongly in the future.

Speaking of put-up hands, they are not so easily worked as one might imagine, unless the victim is particularly green. With clumsy sharpers the trick is apt to be helped out with violence.

A young Finlander came into Montana one day, and like other precocious youths fancied that he understood the game of poker. There was no trouble finding a gentleman who was willing to afford him a little amusement, and who knew of a retired room where the cards could be shuffled without molestation.

The game was strictly for cash, and progressed with varying fortune for about an hour. Then the tricky man concluded it was time to shake things up. So he provided himself with a full hand and gave the Finlander two pair. There was thirteen dollars in the pot. He drew one card.

It was not intended that the Finlander should have more than two pair, but the dealer made a botch and gave him an ace, making three aces and two kings. The mistake was discovered in time, however, and the superfluous ace grabbed from

his hand and destroyed. The Finlander drew another card, and this time he drew a king, making three kings and a pair of aces. When the dealer discovered that the greenhorn had him beaten out in spite of the crooked work, he settled matters by taking the pot anyway, and the final result was the Finlander had to be pried off by the police.

There used to be a trick worked very successfully on railway trains, where card playing was in order. Two or four men would be playing euchre, and the cards would be worked around until the victim found himself with a hand containing three aces.

Then one of the other players would say: "I wish I was playing poker."

The man with the three aces would eye them tenderly, and ask: "Why?"

"Well," the other fellow would reply, "I've got a pretty good hand here. If you let me discard two cards, I can beat any hand in the deck."

Nearly every time the man with three aces would fall into the trap.

"I'll discard two cards and go you," he would say.

The discards would be made, the betting begin, and when the show-down came the man with three aces would be confronted with three hearts, clubs or some suit, and be informed that a flush beat three aces. The victim would be mortified, but he

couldn't see how he had any kick coming, so he would surrender his coin.

One day when this trick was played on the Illinois Central, just out of Dubuque, the victim had a friend looking over his shoulder. He had made no remark during the preliminary talk or the betting, but when the cards were shown he leaned over and touched his friend on the arm.

"Don't pay that money," he said, quietly.

The flush man looked up angrily.

"What's the reason he won't pay it?" he demanded. "A flush beats three aces, don't it?"

"Undoubtedly," was the response, "but you haven't got a flush."

"Haven't got a flush? Well, I'd like to know if I haven't. These are all clubs, and a flush is where all the cards are of the same suit."

There was a general chorus of "That's so," and "You're right," but the objector was not disturbed.

"Popular error—pretty nearly right, but not quite," he returned. "A flush, gentlemen, is five cards of the same suit. Now, you cannot play three cards as a hand in poker; therefore your hand is foul and does not win anything. Of course, neither do the three aces win; both hands are foul and the pot must be divided."

As it happened, they all were gentlemen, or professed to be, and they saw the force of the argument, so the pot was divided, and no one hurt.

This recalls another railway card story, which has been told several times and fathered on different men, but the tenor of the story is the same.

Traveling in a Pullman car one day were a commercial traveler and a mining millionaire who owed his fortune to his faculty of taking advantage of an opportunity and of his fellow man. As the train sped along the pair dropped into a friendly game of euchre.

An hour or so passed, and then the millionaire dealt and turned up a queen. The eyes of the drummer brightened as he gazed at his hand.

"I wish we were playing poker," he ventured.

The mine owner looked over his cards and said nothing.

"How would you like to change the game?" asked the man of orders. "I'd like to play this hand at poker."

The millionaire glanced at his cards again, and remarked pleasantly: "Well, I don't care if I do. But you must let me discard and take this queen."

"Oh, certainly," was the eager response. "I'll bet you fifty dollars on this hand."

"I'll see that and go a hundred better," returned the miner.

The commercial traveler smiled with great glee. "I'll raise you two hundred and fifty," he said, counting out the money.

"Well," remarked the millionaire, calmly, "if you

insist on playing poker, I'm your man. I'll just go you a thousand better."

This bold bet staggered the young man, but he had confidence and a thousand dollars, and he called.

"I have four kings," he said, throwing them on the board.

"Then I'll take the money," the millionaire replied. "I have four aces," and he threw them down before the astonished eyes of the drummer.

"That's all right," said the latter, as soon as he caught his breath. "That's all right—the money is yours, but—but—but—— Say! I'd like to know what the devil a queen has got to do with four aces!"

CHAPTER XIX.

REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM HURT, REFORMED—JOHN
DOUGHERTY'S BET OF ARIZONA TERRITORY—
HIS ADVENTURES IN PERSIA.

A professional gambler is naturally full of poker stories, but the trouble is that he does not care about telling them. Of all professional men the card player is least inclined to talk about his business. Amateurs will expatiate by the yard, but that is because he plays for the fun of it. It is only when a professional reforms that he indulges in reminiscences to any extent, and then it is suspected that he does not tell all he knows.

William Hurt in his day was a famous player, and his experience extended all over the West, and he was no stranger to the East. He used to say that he had shuffled the papers all the way from the roughest mining camps to the most luxurious clubs. Mr. Hurt reformed, and one day when the conversation turned on poker and some one told about a game in the Pacific Club in San Francisco where a straight flush was held while another one was being played in the same room at another table, he turned loose and gave a rendition of the famous draws he had seen, and some of which he made.

"When I speak about great draws and big hands I refer of course to straight games," he said. "Nothing is strange in a crooked game. Every man around the table would hold five aces if you dealt them to him, and there would be nothing remarkable about that; but, speaking about five aces, I knew of five aces being held in a square game.

"In New Orleans, in one of the leading clubs, there is big poker going on every night, and there are only gentlemen in the game. At the beginning of the game each man takes \$500 worth of chips, and no money passes at the table. The game is unlimited—that is, the limit is \$5,000, but that is about the same as no limit. They always play with two decks, and while one is dealt the other is shuffled ready for the next deal.

"One night four gentlemen were playing. One held a straight flush pat, and the other held three aces before the draw. They soon exhausted their \$500 worth of chips and then bet their thousands. Finally the man with the three aces called for the draw. In the draw he got two more aces, making five aces in his hand. He showed his hand right away, saying there was evidently a mistake in the deck. The man with the straight flush claimed the money. Then the two left the decision to the other gentlemen about the table and they decided the bets off. By a mistake the extra ace had been

shifted from one deck to the other. Now, perhaps it wasn't so remarkable that one card should get into the wrong deck, but think of that ace being next to another ace and that these two aces should be dealt to a man who already held three aces in his hand. That's what you might call oceans of luck.

"Once I was playing in a game in the Russ House in San Francisco, and I borrowed \$500 to get into the game, by the way. One time when I was dealing a man across the table had aces up and I had a king full on queens. I knew what he had and I knew that there was another ace right at the bottom of the pack."

Here one of the listeners suggested that Mr. Hurt was only to talk about square games.

"Well, the draw was square," answered the reformed gambler. "I knew what he had before the draw and I knew where a third ace lay in the deck. I didn't know what card I gave him when he called for one. Now, you know a man might play for a hundred years and not hand out that lonesome fourth ace right from the top of the pack. Well, that was where the fourth ace lay, and the fellow with his ace full broke me with my king full. That was as remarkable a draw as ever occurred. I knew the position of three of the aces and the card he drew was the fourth, to which I paid no attention, because the chance that he would not get it

was sufficient for me to bet against. Another aggravating feature was that the man who loaned me the \$500 thought I purposely played away his money and then divided with the other fellow. I guess he thinks so to this day, but I tell you I was a good deal more surprised than he was when I saw that ace full spread out on the table.

"I held four tens pat in a game I was playing in at Sioux City," continued Mr. Hurt, when some one asked him his highest hand that ever was beaten. "One of the men playing was very drunk and very reckless. He had been plunging all the time, betting high whether he had anything or not. Of course he won many pots by bluffing, because no one would call him for a big bet unless he was well heeled. I was waiting for a big hand, because I knew that as soon as it came I could break him.

"My four tens came just at the right time. There was a jack pot and I had the first say. I opened it gently, say for \$25, because I knew the drunken fellow would come back at me. He did with a big raise. I just called him, because I wanted more play after the draw, and he was sure to bet everything he had. I looked over my hand as though in deep thought and then called for one card. 'I'll draw to the strength of my hand; give me three,' said the drunken man.

"Then I made a heavy bet and he came at me harder. We kept at each other back and forth

until all our money was on the table, and then I showed down my four tens. Blamed if he didn't skin out four queens! Of course I was the one that was broke.

"I saw a square hand win in a crooked game in a club house in Butte City, Montana, and I'll tell you about it, if you insist upon something about crooked games when I want to tell you about square games. There were five men playing. Two of them were in together to do up another two, but they did not want to take anything from the fifth fellow, who was a friend of theirs, though he did not know there was anything wrong about the game.

"One of the two who were doing the dirty work rung in a cold deck, and he dealt great hands to the fellows who were to be skinned. One was four nines, I think, and the other a jack full. He was careful to give no pair to the man he wanted to befriend, and he dealt his partner the winning hand; or at least he thought it was the winning hand. Well, to the surprise of the men who had put up the cold deck, the fifth fellow with no pair stood right in and saw every raise. They didn't dare to kick him or even wink at him, so he piled his money in with the rest.

"When it came to a show down there was \$3,600 on the table, and the fellow that had no pair won it all. The man that fixed the deck had paid no

attention to suits; he was looking out only for pairs and threes and fours. He dealt the fifth man a four straight of clubs and the one card he drew made a straight flush.

"The best draw I ever saw was in Olympia during a session of the Washington Legislature. One senator there was wild about poker. I suppose he



had just learned the game and was infatuated; at any rate he wanted to take off the bridle every hand. To win a hundred on a bluff was worth a thousand to him.

"In one game where this senator was sitting there was a hand on which there had been very heavy betting before the

"I'll draw to a straight flush," said he.

draw. The plunger was in, of course, and raised until all his money was up so there could be no betting after the draw. He put down his cards and I never saw a worse hand. He had no pair, not even a face card, and he was going to throw away

the bunch and call for five cards when he noticed that he held the nine and ten of clubs.

" 'I'll draw to a straight flush,' said he; and do you know the three cards that came to him were all nines. Of course he then had four nines and raked in the pot. One man had three kings and another had a jack full. I think that was as remarkable as anything I ever saw in poker.

"I made a rather good draw myself one day on the train coming from Fresno. Three of the gamblers that work the Pullmans tried to get me to play cards. I

knew their business as soon as I saw them, but as it happened they did not know me. Two of them were dressed as countrymen, and the third did the gentleman play. He looked as much like a gentleman as a bulldog, by the way.



He looked as much like a gentleman as a bull dog.

"They started in the stale way, suggesting a game of euchre. One would remark

that he would like to bet his euchre hand in a poker game and another would agree with him. Well, I consented to play euchre with them, but first I looked carelessly at their cards, and then went to my grip. I had a couple of packs of cards in my bag—not for poker; I never gambled on trains. Sometimes I made the acquaintance of gentlemen on trains and afterward played with them in their clubs or hotels, but on the trains I played nothing save an occasional game of whist.

“I could not resist, however, attending to the case of those three train gamblers. I happened to have a pack just like the cards with which they were playing and I took from it an ace. Then I joined in the game and bided my time. Then one of them finally said he’d like to bet his hand in poker, and the others said they’d agree to change the game, holding the hands dealt to them in euchre. I consented also and we bet our money. They bet all they had, including a roll of bogus bills, called ‘spiels,’ used for that sort of work. Then I showed down four aces and pocketed all the money. You should have heard them roar and kick when I took the pot!

“At Lathrop I saw a hotel runner I used to know. I pointed out to him the gamblers, and then I handed to him the roll of ‘spiels’ and told him to give it back to the fellows, but I kept the good money.

“ ‘Great Lord!’ said the runner. ‘Did them fellers try to skin you?’

“ ‘They did,’ I answered, softly.

“ ‘The fools!’ said he. ‘I put up half the money to stake ‘em to make a winning on the train, and they played it off against Billy Hurt, taking him for a dude.’ ”

Another famous gambler is John Dougherty—not reformed. In the palmy days of Tombstone, John first came to the surface and has been on the top wave ever since. He is known from East to West, but his chief stamping ground is in the territories, where his free and easy ways are not likely to cause so much remark. Dougherty never sat down and reeled off a lot of entertaining talk to a reporter, but he had adventures enough to make a book.

In 1889 Dougherty sat down with a man named Ike Jackson, a wealthy cattle owner and great poker player of Colorado City, Texas, to determine the poker championship of the wild and woolly West. It was in Bowen’s saloon in Santa Fe, New Mexico. There was no limit to the game and it was understood that both men were exceptionally well heeled. It was also understood that the game was perfectly on the square, as neither man was to be trifled with.

They played along in a desultory way for hours, when finally both got good hands at the same time.

The betting then became fast and furious. More than a hundred citizens of Santa Fe, including every gambler in town, had gathered about to watch the progress of the game. Among them was Governor Prince, who knew and liked Dougherty. After about \$100,000 had been piled on the board the Texas man said to Dougherty that he was running a little short of money, but that he had a ranch and ten thousand head of cattle in Texas, and that he would like the privilege of making a deed of them, should it become necessary to bet \$100,000 more. Dougherty replied that it was perfectly agreeable to him, but asked that the same privilege be granted to him if it became necessary to put up real estate as collateral in order to play his hand for what it was worth. Jackson assented, of course.

After the Texan had exhausted all his ready cash and Dougherty came back at him with another raise, Jackson concluded to bring things to a finish. So he raised the Arizona man \$100,000, throwing the deed to his Texas property into the pot.

Dougherty called for pen and paper, and wrote hurriedly for a few minutes. Then, catching the Governor's eye, he beckoned him to one side, and before Prince knew what had happened he was looking down the barrel of a murderous 45-calibre revolver.

"Now, Governor, you sign this," said Dough-

erty, and he handed his excellency a paper that contained about a dozen lines of writing. "Sign it, I say, or I will kill you. I like you and would fight for you, but I love my reputation as a poker player better than I do you or any one else."

The Governor, without looking at the contents of the paper—in fact, he was pressed for time just then—nervously attached his signature. Then, walking back to the table, Dougherty threw the paper in the pot, and said impressively as he did so: "I raise you the Territory of New Mexico. There's the deed."



"Now, Governor, you sign this," said Dougherty.

The Texan of course had to lay down, but as he did so he muttered an oath that might have been heard in Lower California. Then, as he saw Dougherty rake in the big pot, Jackson gave a nervous twitch at his mustache and said: "That's all right, Dougherty; scoop it in, it's yours, but it's a damn good thing for you that Jim Hogg, the governor of Texas, isn't here!"

In those days Dougherty would not go into a game unless the other players could show at least \$10,000 each. There was nothing small about him but his feet. When he ordered a drink he threw a fiver on the counter, and if any change was offered him he felt insulted. But hard times struck the West, and poker—that is, poker of the Dougherty stripe—became a scarce article. So when he got down to his last \$50,000 he emigrated to New York. While there he learned that in Persia the young men played poker fairly well, and when they got a hand that amounted to anything they bet it until the cows came home. That was the kind of game Dougherty was looking for, and so to Persia he went, or he says he did, and we'll have to let it go at that.

He had no trouble in being introduced to Persian poker circles, and he was soon a popular fellow, even among the princes, although he could not talk the language of the country. He also had to learn a great deal that was new to him in the way of poker. Four deuces beat four aces, a "little dog" topped a sequence, and there were several other wrinkles that caused him to open his eyes. Again, there is never any money in sight. A man sits near the table and records the bets, and a settlement is made after the game is over. This book-keeper, or whatever they call him, is also a linguist, and whenever foreigners play with these princes he translates the raises and such like.

Well, one night Dougherty had been trailing in only to be beaten on the show down. Finally he caught a pair of sixes at the time one of the princes had four of a kind. There had been a deal of jolly-ing and horse-play going on all night, and Dougherty, of course, couldn't understand the words that were being slung around, but he laughed as heartily as the others and always looked intensely interested. He would simply skin his cards, come in when the notion struck him or lay down. When he picked up the sixes he looked the Persian in the eye and the Persian laughed.

"Tre-le-lu," said the Persian.

"Guying me, I reckon," said Dougherty to himself; "but I'll give you some of your own sort of words. Tru-le-lum," he said aloud.

"Tru-le-lili-lo," said the Persian.

"Tru-le-lele-lili-lole-lum," replied Dougherty.

Scarcely had he got the words out of his mouth when the young prince threw down his four of a kind, kicked over the table, fell forward on a sofa and broke out in a sob.

"Great heavens, man!" exclaimed the interpreter. "You raised him eleven millions that time!"

Of course Dougherty raked in the pot, and thus having mastered the language he was so successful that when he left Persia he was rich beyond the wildest dreams of avarice. But he bet it all on the elections and lost.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE BEAR SPOILED THE JACK POT—TOUCHING TALE OF A DOG THAT TIPPED OFF POKER HANDS TO HIS MASTER.

It is no doubt a slander, but people will persist in saying that when a party of men go on a fishing trip they never start with less than a gallon of liquid refreshment in a jug, and this statement has also been made about hunters. There may be some truth in these stories, but there is certainly no doubt that no expedition was ever properly equipped without a pack of cards. I don't mean a party of boys going after woodchuck, but from two to a dozen of nice men who have had experience and know that there is bound to come a few rainy days, when it is much better for the lungs to stay under the tent and shuffle the pasteboards than go tramping after game that has too much sense to be abroad.

It is about one of those sensible hunting trips that this story treats. It was a California affair, and the inciting cause of the hunt was a grizzly bear which was supposed to linger around Mono Lake. The party comprised Alex McGregor, Jim Watts, Manuel Lopez and Sing Wong—the latter a servitor—and they pitched a tent near the lake

to have four weeks fun, but, as the Fates willed it, the fun was all crowded into one week and there was lots to spare. We will let McGregor tell the story. .

"You see, Jim Watts had some notions of his own about how to have a good time in camp, and when we were putting up our stuff for the trip Jim said it wouldn't do for a man to make too radical a change in his way of life, and for his part he didn't propose to break up his constitution by chopping wood or going to bed at an unseemly hour. So he piled in a coal-oil lamp, a deck of cards and a four-gallon can of kerosene. We had plenty of beans, and Sing was cautioned to reserve from the pot enough to furnish chips for a pretty stiff game.

"We pitched our tent on the bank of a little stream and got fixed up in shape, and I regret to say that owing to the pernicious counsels and advice of Watts we did no hunting, but sat up all night playing poker and slept every day until noon. Sing did all the work except taking care of the horses, which a Chinaman can't do. Manuel did that, and we allowed him the kitty for it. It came in very handy, because he had the worst kind of luck, and went broke regularly every night.

"One night we had a fine game going on and were playing for a jack pot which had gone around four times. I had an opening hand, Manuel had

something good, and Watts wanted only one card. Just as we were calling for cards Sing jumped up



Sing jumped up with a yell.

with a yell from his blankets at the back of the tent and stampeded right over our game, knocking the oil can, on which we were playing, wrong end up and scattering the beans all around.

“Manuel pulled his revolver and was about to take a shot at Sing, when we heard a growl, and turning our heads saw the gray muzzle of a grizzly poked through the back of the tent into the syrup dish. Manuel was mad clear through, and crying

‘Dama you, spoila such a pot like him! Carajo!’ he popped at the bear’s head.

"Then we all got up and went out of the tent. I was in a considerable hurry and took the front tent pole with me, and Jim tripped over the lamp en route. The bear came in rather hastily at the back and knocked down the other tent pole. That brought down the whole arrangement about his ears, and in two seconds there was more fun than a barrel of monkeys in that camp.

"The lamp broke and exploded when it fell, and evidently the plug had fallen out of the oil can, for everything was ablaze in no time. Old Bruin—for we discovered afterward by the club-foot tracks that he was the disturber—got tangled up in the burning tent, and in rolling about he sopped up a good deal of the oil. While he was slamming things around like a fully developed earthquake we stood at a safe distance and plugged revolver bullets into the muss, which didn't improve the bear's temper.

"It was probably less than a minute when he came out of the ruins, blazing like a Fourth of July celebration. His oil-soaked hair was on fire in patches and pieces of burning canvas hung about him like streamers. And of all the howling and roaring I ever heard that was the worst. The old fellow just stormed around that camp, clawing at the fire, tearing the canvas with his teeth, and belting everything that came in his way. When he'd swing a paw and hit a tree the bark would fly up ten feet.

"When he came into view Manuel and I shinned up two tall trees and Sing crawled into a hollow log and kept quiet, but Jim Watts stood there like a chump and watched the circus. We couldn't kill the bear because our guns were in the tent



He came out of the ruin blazing like
a Fourth of July.

and were being burned up, and revolvers were of no account against a beast in such tantrums. Watts did pepper him, though, and got into trouble for doing it. His bullets finally attracted Bruin's attention and he made a rush for the daring marksman.

"Then Watts concluded to leave that locality. He didn't have time to pick out a route. He just had to scoot, and he made a success of it. He headed for the bank of the creek, which was about ten feet higher than the water, with the illuminated bear in hot pursuit. There was no chance to dodge or turn, and Watts took

the leap. He struck feet first about twenty feet from the bank, and went down ker-chunk.

"He came up to breathe just as old Bruin piled over the bank and fell into the water with a splash and a sizzle. Watts then swam under water and crawled silently out in a dark place. Old Bruin kept straight across and landed on the opposite bank. His plunge had extinguished him and he was blazing only with wrath, so he tore away through the brush, growling and making the bark fly.

"Watts came back to camp, and when we gathered around the burning ruins of our once happy home he showed up a bobtail flush, which he had held in his left hand all the time, and said: 'Wasn't that a dandy hand to draw to in a jack pot?' "

When the lower order of animals are spoken of the mind naturally reverts to the dog. To those who have not studied the habits of that sagacious and noble animal the following story will sound fishy, but dog fanciers will readily concede its truth, and could no doubt match it with others much more wonderful. It rests on the authority of a gentleman who made his appearance at the hotel clerk's desk, while that individual was counting a large roll of bills.

His attire was a sort of black drapery, and fell about his lean form in folds that a decorator might envy. He had a week's growth of anarchistic bristles on his dirty though good-natured phiz, and his

left eye had a peculiar squint that suggested a lat-



ent knowledge of something or other. As the shadow fell across the desk the clerk looked up and asked what was wanted. The visitor

leaned easily against the desk, adjusted a greasy tie that showed a disposition to keep company with his right ear, and said in a confidential tone:

"I might not look it, but I'm a college graduate. You may marvel at the state of my toilet, but since leaving the old home in Maine I have had some very strange experiences."

"I might not look it, but I'm a college graduate."

The clerk put away the bills in the safe and then became an active listener.

"You see," continued the stranger, "being a college graduate I thought I had a head for engineering and went West to prospect in silver mines. Then I drifted north into the Montana gold fields, where I settled in Lone Gulch on Bloody Run. There I published the Lone Gulch Advocate for two months. I forget now what I advocated, but I remember that I printed a true story one day about a prominent official. In twenty-four hours thereafter I was going down the gulch like a long-distance runner.

"While filling the important position of opinion moulder on the Advocate a friend of mine comes in one day and says: 'Bill, I have a valuable dog. He can waltz, he can sing and he can play on the piano, but I want a drink and I'll soak him to you for a dime.'

"So I takes the canine and he followed me here, there and everywhere. Being generally short of cash I had to keep moving, and finally I came to a place where they were building a big irrigating ditch, and there I got a job. I found quite a number of college graduates like myself, and at the end of the first week when we were paid off we sat down to a quiet game of poker.

"As soon as the cards were dealt I noticed Calamity (that's the dog) take a quiet walk around the crowd and then come back and crawl under my chair. Presently I felt something bump

against my legs. I looked under the table and doggone if that dog wasn't knocking his head against me in the most systematic way. I didn't know at first what to make of it, and at the next deal I watched him closer. Then I saw that he was taking tab of the other fellows' cards. He just seemed to peek once out of the corner of his eye, and then apparently wrote it down in his mind.

"When he got under my chair again and began to bump me with his head I paid strict attention, and soon made out the code. You see, he'd tap me lightly at first to show which player he meant; one tap signified the first man to my left, two taps the next man, and so on. Having given me that cue, he'd scratch me with one paw to show that the fellow held a king, twice if it was a queen, hug me with his paw if it was a jack, and with both paws if it was an ace. Then he'd bump my leg twice if the man held a pair, three times for threes, and so on. There was much more of the code, which I only learned after several sittings, but I've told you enough to show you what a lollah he was."

"But didn't the signaling consume lots of time?" asked the clerk, suspiciously.

"No, indeed; not a bit of it. Calamity was a very rapid sender, and after I got onto his style it was easy. I'm a pretty good telegrapher myself, and thirty seconds after the dog went around the

table I'd know the hands of every man in the game. I could always manage to delay the betting half a minute, you see."

"Remarkable dog, wasn't he? Well, sir, I beat all of the boys out of their coin, and my success was so marked that they finally suspected me of being a professional, and run me out of camp. But I didn't mind that, and pretty soon I was cutting a swath all through the West. I got so I wouldn't play with any one but a millionaire or railroad president."

"Very remarkable story," said the hotel clerk. "But you don't look like you hurt your back carrying around any of the coin now."

"Lost it all in speculating in grain," replied the stranger, with a sigh.

"And where's Calamity?"

"Dead. I was taken ill with the toothache one night and couldn't play. Calamity missed me, but such was his thirst for poker that he went into the room and began butting another fellow. He didn't understand the code, and being just then a heavy loser, arose in his wrath and kicked the dog out of the second-story window, and he broke his neck. I wouldn't take a million dollars for that dog."

CHAPTER XXI.

PRACTICAL JOKING—HOW THE DENTIST WAS FIXED—
THE FRESH BASEBALL REPORTER AND THE PLAYERS.

Although poker is a social game it is not one wherein practical jokes are encouraged. It has been discovered that there is more fun when everybody attends strictly to business, barring the few pleasantries that may be exchanged in the way of badinage, and which are frequently useful when one is running a bluff. Yet there are periods when a joke can be worked successfully without danger of making an enemy for life.

Several traveling men were sitting around the stove in a country tavern one night, wondering what to do to pass away the evening before the hour of retiring, and one man suggested a game of penny ante. The suggestion met with favor, and on being broached to the landlord he said he didn't mind and would join them if they had no objection. They said he would be very welcome.

"You mustn't nary one of ye breathe a word of this to my old woman, cos if she hearn tell that I wuz a-playin' of cards she'd naturally everlastingly bang me over the head," cautioned the landlord, and the men cautiously climbed the stairs to a back room. Abe, the boy of all work, brought up the

rear of the procession, carrying a big jug of cider.

The landlord had no chips, but he produced a peck measure of wooden buttons, such as women used to cover and wear on their dresses for ornament. Each man took a hundred of these for a dollar, and the game began. It proceeded along with much enjoyment until about 10 o'clock, when one of the traveling men excused himself for a moment but soon returned to the game, having his pockets filled with just such wooden buttons as were used for chips. These were put into the game without the knowledge of the landlord. At the close of the game he settled in full for every chip, but when he came to brush the buttons back into the peck measure he found that he had more than enough to fill it.

He regarded the measure for a minute with wonder and then he said, scratching his head: "Cripes, but that durn measure must have shrunk like the devil."

The traveling men engaged in an argument over the mystery, but did not elucidate it until their next visit, and then they paid the landlord about two dollars and called it square.

Here is another tale of how a man was skinned in a friendly way. To correctly tell the tale it is necessary to first state that the game occurred in a barber shop which was situated on the second floor of a prominent building in a small city.

The barber, who was the proprietor of the shop, was the banker, and to identify him his name shall be Dan. Others in the game were a young lawyer whose first name was Sidney, a traveling man known as Frank and a young society man whose Christian name was Harold. These four gathered at the tontorial parlors at the time vulgarly known as the shank of the evening. A small round table was pulled out from a back room, the curtains were pulled down and the lights turned up and the game began.

About the time everybody had got his toes warm the banker realized that he was up against it, and he was starting in to cuss his luck when a feeble tap was heard at the door. This was the private signal, but the players supposed that they were the only ones in possession of it. It must be the police and horrid visions of a night behind the bars filled their minds.

Quietly the cards were hidden, the table shoved to one side, and all the participants were busily engaged reading newspapers or books when Dan went to the door. The outsider was a well-known character about town, known as Doc, because he was a dentist. He also had the reputation of being a man that knew everything that was going on. He could always tell where everyone was and seemed to know everyone's business. On this occasion he explained that he just happened to

think that the boys might be playing poker, and he was just dying to take a hand in the game. Incidentally he mentioned that he had a roll of bills in his pocket that he didn't mind losing provided there was a man in the room clever enough to take it from him.

They made a place for the intruder with no very good grace. This feeling rather increased after nine or ten hands, when no one seemed to get so much as a peek at Doc's bank roll. On the contrary, everything was traveling his way with maddening regularity. Harold in particular was worked up over this state of affairs, and while he was sitting there like a dead man passing out his chips and never taking one in he conceived the idea of working a little joke on Doc and also getting even.

Calling Dan into the back room on some flimsy excuse he advised him of his scheme and how work was to be started to put it into execution. Then Dan took Sidney to one side and quietly told him of the plan and the part he was to play in it. Frank kept up his end by getting into an interesting colloquy with Doc over the latest scandal in high life, and there is always at least one in a small town.

The arrangements having been perfected, all sat down again to the game. The cards were dealt, the betting went on and the demon dentist again

swept the table of all the little red, white and blue representations of money.

"Let's make the next one a jack pot," said Harold.

"All right," responded Doc, carelessly. "I can win a little quicker in jacks."

Dan, to whom fell the deal, made ready and shuf-



Dan lingered long enough to substitute a cold deck of cards.

fled the cards. Frank cut them, and Dan was just about to distribute the pasteboards when Sidney uttered a low moan as if gasping for

breath and fell backward off his chair, apparently striking heavily on the floor. Instantly everyone was on his feet, hurrying to the aid of

the supposedly injured man. That is, everyone except Dan, who lingered long enough to substitute a cold deck of cards for those in use.

Then he joined in with the others, and between them they had Sidney on a lounge, rubbed his hands and gave him a drink of water. He rapidly revived, and explained that he had been subject to

these attacks for a year past, but he had been assured by his physician that they were not dangerous, and that he was perfectly able to continue playing.

So he sat down to the table, the cards were dealt and the conspirators kicked each other as they saw a smile of pleasure spread over the face of the intended victim.

"I'll open it," said Doc promptly, as he shoved a stack of ten chips on the table.

Frank and Sidney scrutinized their hands and announced that the pace was too hot for them. Harold added five to Doc's ten and Dan went five better. Doc tried to look as if he were surprised, and simply saw the raises. When it came to the draw he hummed and hawed for a while and then concluded he would take one card. Harold took one card and Dan two.

It being Doc's first bet he bet five chips as a feeler. Harold raised it five and Dan raised him. Doc smiled in a satisfied way and lifted it up about twenty. To his surprise he was lifted as much in return. Then there was an epidemic of raising: everyone seemed furiously certain of their hand, and no one would call. Frank and Sidney looked on and seemed paralyzed with wonderment.

Dan, being the banker, had plenty of chips with which he and Harold covered all of Doc's good money and in the end Doc's money ran out and he

had to call. This being agreeable to the other players Dan laid down a pair of queens and three tens.

"Was that what you were betting on?" inquired Doc. "That hand looks like a foot. I haven't got much here; only two little aces, with two more to keep them company."

Then he smiled a broad smile as he made preparations to gather in the big pile of money and chips. But he forgot that Harold was still to be heard from.

"Carefully, Doc," said the society leader. "Drop that or you might break it. Your aces are not so warm in this game."

"You don't mean" stammered Doc.

"That I can beat them? Take a look at these."

Doc gazed at the straight flush spread out before him and then at the agonizing spectacle of Harold calmly raking in the pot, and then he arose and left the room without uttering a word. The next day his money was returned to him and he was informed that he had been skinned. And he never heard the last of it.

Baseball men are famous poker players, and very naturally so. Although we occasionally hear a wail about the way the "magnates" oppress the poor players, buy and sell them, and otherwise woe-fully put on them, it is noticed that they do not go out of the business until they are knocked out.

The truth is that they are the best paid class of men in any business, making more in a season of six month than the average professional man does in a year. Then again, their work is play; something that they would do for fun if no one hired them to do it. They travel in first-class cars, put up at first-class hotels, play only when the weather is fine, and a day's work for them is less than four hours.

With these advantages it is no wonder that they are inclined to be sportive and wile away their off hours with cards. At the same time it is not to be inferred that they are high rollers; there is no case on record where a ball player has got his name in the papers for making a gigantic winning. It is all between themselves and at the end of the season no player's bank roll is very much depleted. When an outsider gets into their game he is apt to have a peculiar tale to tell.

"When I started out as a baseball correspondent in—never mind the year," said the sporting editor, "I considered myself as smart as any young man could be. I was personally acquainted with all the players and was admitted to their confidences, consequently I thought I was the whole thing. .

"When we arrived at the first city where the club was scheduled to play it rained and the game was declared off. Time weighed heavily and a game of poker was suggested. Of course I had to be in

it, just to show that I was sporty. There were six in the party beside myself, all finished players, but I happened to be in luck, and as a man will do in such circumstances I ascribed it all to my skill and forced the play.

"Finally a nice jack pot was on the board and the first man that had a say opened it. I looked at my hand and saw a combination of cards that ordinarily would be thrown into the deck. But I made up my mind to make a star play, and immediately boosted the pot. The others stayed, but when it came to drawing cards I stood pat. The opener bet and I raised with an air of confidence that threw the others off and they dropped. The opener had not bettered his hand and he also quit.

"Everything would have been all right had I simply thrown my hand into the pot, but I was so delighted at having bluffed so clever a lot that I laid the cards face upwards on the table, at the same time giving one of those idiotic chuckles that a youngster will when he thinks he has fooled men older and more clever than himself. I saw an exchange of glances go around that I mistook for admiration, but which I afterward learned was a silent comment on my freshness.

"Nothing further transpired at the game and I quit a winner. A few days later we reached Cincinnati for the Fourth of July games, and being a day ahead of time, a game was arranged with a

local club in a near-by town. We started early in the morning, there being a dozen in the party, including the manager and myself. We were in the smoker, and as soon as the train started the boys began skylarking, much to the edification of the other passengers, who were mostly country folk.

"I was enjoying the fun immensely when suddenly I found myself in the hands of a half dozen players, and in a twinkling almost they had stripped me of all my outer garments. Here was a pleasant predicament for a fashionable young man! I had a light overcoat with me, and with that I covered myself as best I could, but to get up and look for my clothes in that attire was more than I had the courage to do. I called appealingly to the manager but he was at the other end of the coach and apparently deeply engrossed in a newspaper. When the conductor came along he simply gave me the laugh and passed by.

"Then a chorus came from the players: 'Why don't you bluff it out?' Then I realized why I was getting the dose.

"I rode for about fifteen minutes in that shape and then my clothes were suddenly dumped on me, all nicely tied into knots. I had a great deal of trouble in getting them on, but I took it all good naturedly, for what else could I do? But they had not finished with me yet.

"When we reached our destination it lacked an

hour before dinner and some of the players went driving, while the rest lounged around the hotel. Presently one of the players returned riding a nag of the coach variety, apparently about as docile as a cow. The rider announced that he was tired already of such a hard riding beast (I learned after-



“He must have been a circus horse at one time.”

ward that he was a splendid horseman) and invited me to take his place.

“I wasn’t much of a rider, but to show that I bore no hard feelings for the morning’s performance, I mounted the horse, and instantly some one gave him a thundering slap, and away he went. He must have been a circus horse at one period because I never saw one carry on the way he did. He appeared to go most of the time only on one

leg, and I was almost shaken to pieces. I finally got him into a walk, and was thinking of returning to the hotel when a buggy was driven up rapidly behind me and I heard the swish of a whip as it fell on my horse's haunches. He was off like a shot and I held on with all fours. The buggy kept up with me however and the whip continued to fall. I had just time to look around and see the laughing faces of two of the players when my horse swerved into a side road and the buggy passed on.

"Well, I finally got the infernal animal under control again, and rode him back to the hotel, but I was so sore that I could not sit down to dinner with any degree of comfort. The boys did not ask me anything about my adventures, but they talked a great deal about card playing, and how a player who could carry through a grand bluff was sure to beat the game. I didn't join in the conversation, but I smiled an occasional sickly smile to show that I bore no malice.

"The final chapter in the hazing, for such it was, came a week later. We were in St. Louis, and after the first game, I went with about four of the boys to a variety theatre. Among the performers was a singer who styled herself La Belle Clarisse, or something like that, who had fluffy hair, and looked very attractive in the glare of the footlights. We applauded her enthusiastically, thereby attracting her attention and she smiled sweetly on us.

"One of the boys professed to know her, at any rate he sent her a note by the waiter, and after the show she came to our table. The lights had been turned down by that time and she looked and talked charmingly. An invitation was extended to her to witness the next day's game, and I was delighted when I was designated as her escort. In my verdancy I congratulated myself at being thus honored, and pictured myself creating a furore when I escorted that beautiful being to the ball grounds and past the envious multitude.

"But I was grievously disenchanted when I went to her boarding house next day and saw La Belle. The bright sunlight was different from the footlights and she appeared to have aged about twenty-five years since the night before. Her fluffy hair was gone and her face was seamed and sallow, and there was also a tough look about her mouth that I had not previously noticed. But there was no chance to back out. There she was all toggled out, so gay that you could see her a mile off, and I had to take her.

"Oh, how I suffered! Instead of creating a furore I attracted attention of another kind. Everybody looked at us, to be sure, but not in the way I fancied. The few acquaintances I had made ignored me, and I would have been isolated if it had not been for the players. They did not forget me. They took every opportunity of grouping in

front of the stand where we sat and grinning at us in a way that focused all eyes in our vicinity. I sat the game through, but I had alternate cold chills and hot sweats all the time, and after I had escorted La Belle home, I made a solemn vow never to be fresh again. The players evidently thought that I had been properly educated, for they let up on me thereafter. Another result of my experience was that I never bluffed in a poker game afterwards—that is, I never let any one know that I did.”

CHAPTER XXII.

CROOKED GAMBLING—AN EXPERT EXPLAINS THE MYSTERIES OF SECOND CARD, PAPER MEN AND HOLD OUTS.

There is no pleasure at all in playing poker unless it is on the square. If a man in addition to bending all his mind to the proper playing of his hand has also to watch his opponent to see that he does not cheat, he may win a little money at the game but he certainly cannot extract much fun from the pastime. Fortunately for the popularity of the game it is not easy to cheat at poker. Doubtless there are a number of players who have the inclination but they lack the skill. To stack a pack or even slip a card requires sleight of hand that cannot be mastered without years of practice, and it will not do to cheat unless it can be done without detection. No amateur player cares to be thrown out of a window or booted down the stairs.

The amateur player who would cheat if he could illustrates his weakness by the way he tries to put up the cards. When he is out of a deal, he will gather together the discard and sort out the aces, kings or other high cards, and bunch them, so that if the cards are not well shuffled on the next deal

there is a chance of catching three of a kind on the draw. He watches the shuffle and cut very closely, and regulates his draw by what he can remember of the position of the cards, and if the cards are given him to cut, he cuts them light or deep so as to give him the best chance of getting the stacked cards.

These and a number of other little devices which are familiar to poker players, are not exactly cheating, but they are efforts to gain some advantage over the other players, independent of the natural run of the cards. It is pleasant to record that the players who resort to such tricks are not remarkable for their winnings. Their calculations frequently go wrong and then they come to grief in a way that is a source of merriment to the men who are content to play the game strictly on its merits.

It would be an interesting sight to run some of these fellows up against a professional card sharp, and see how they would get skinned. Their money would not be worth two cents on the dollar, because the professional leaves nothing to chance.

Professional gamblers may have a home but they do not stay there. They are continually traveling from place to place, continually looking for a game. They work a town for a week or maybe a month, and then, when the atmosphere begins to be lurid they move on. That gives an opening for another professional to work the town, with a dif-

ferent kind of game. There is a sucker born every minute.

Professionals usually travel in pairs, under the guise of legitimate business agents or as wealthy pleasure seekers. They have letters of introduction from prominent people—bogus, of course—and as a result they are introduced into fashionable clubs, and subsequently into the game. Unlike amateurs, who are prone to brag of their winnings, the professional will try to hide his gains, and very often will claim to be loser when, in reality he has won many dollars.

There are a hundred ways of cheating, mechanical and otherwise, but the most of them cannot be used successfully except in a room and on a table fitted up for that purpose, and these are found only in crooked gambling joints. The most skillful gamblers rely on the dexterity of their fingers, and carry no appliances that might come to light unexpectedly and put them in a very awkward plight. Some are known as "paper men" others as "hold outs," while more are called "second dealers." They all, of course, have a general knowledge of the various methods of cheating, but they excel, as a rule, in some one of these systems. A retired gambler, who, in his day was the most skilled "second dealer" in the country, explains these methods very entertainingly.

"It took me more than four years of hard prac-

tice to learn how to deal seconds properly. A 'second dealer' is a man who can deal cards from any part of the pack without detection, so that, previous to the players drawing cards he skilfully slips his thumb along the bottom of the pack and catches a glimpse of the cards to be dealt. If he sees anything he needs he can deal it to himself as easily as if it were on the top of the pack. If he has a partner he will know by signs just exactly what he wants, and if he can't give it to him he will motion to him to stay out.

"If his partner has a pair he will look through the pack, and if he observes the other pair of the same he will make a sign to his partner, who will thereupon raise the price to draw cards. As a rule, partners sit together when they play, so that one can cut to the other's liking, and this is in itself a science, for the man cutting the cards will do it to the satisfaction of the whole board, as he apparently mixes them up, while in reality he does not disturb his partner's prearranged cards.

"In this instance the man who cuts the cards would naturally be the last to get cards, and his partner has an easy thing giving him what he wants. When he is first to get cards, it is different. It is rather difficult to pull two cards from different parts of the pack, and then all eyes are watching the dealer when he is giving out the first cards. So, while holding the pack in his left hand just be-

fore starting to deal to those drawing, he will find some pretext for reaching his right hand across the table, and in this manner he will momentarily hide the deck. In that instant he will shift with his fingers one of the cards his partner needs to the top of the pack. He will repeat this movement the same as before, and bring the other card on top. His partner will draw three cards and will, of course, get four of a kind."

The gambler then showed how he could bring cards from the center to the top of the pack. Holding the pack in his left hand as if about to deal, he would shove his forefinger between the deck and right above the card he was to bring on top. He would then raise his forefinger, thereby lifting the cards above it, and then with the middle finger he would slide the wanted card out about half an inch toward his fingers. Then he would press down on the card and in this manner raise it outside the pack. He would then remove his forefinger, thereby allowing the cards to fall back again. The needed card would be standing on its side outside the pack, and it would then be an easy matter to shift it on top of the pack. In fact, the whole operation looked easy enough until tried, and then it became very difficult.

"Paper men," explained this expert, "are men who make a specialty of reading cards. They have a system of marking the backs of cards so that

they can tell all the aces, kings, queens, jacks, and eventually the whole pack, if it is used long enough. This knowledge of course gives them a tremendous advantage, especially in a two handed game, for they can tell just what the other player has by looking at the backs of his cards.

"I'll never forget the first time I had an experience with a paper man. I was in a Denver saloon one day, and a fat stranger with whom I had struck up an acquaintance suggested a game of poker. I accepted the proposition with pleasure, and we retired to an ante room for the sport. Before we had been playing very long I discovered that my friend was using a pack of readers. I had given him a few good hands, but he wouldn't play, for of course he could see that I had a better hand, so I made up my mind to fool him.

"It finally came to my deal when there was a pretty good jack pot. I had lost a little money and I now set about getting it back with interest. So I stacked my fat friend three aces and gave myself three kings. After I had given out the two hands I laid down the deck, and the top card was an ace. Directly under the ace I had a five of clubs and the six of clubs and a king under that.

"When the fellow saw the ace on top he smiled, for he knew that he had four aces sure. He opened the pot for a small amount and I gave it a lift. He came back at me with another raise, and we kept

it up, until he finally said that he had only a little money left to bet with, for he wanted some fun after the draw. I guess he thought I must be soft with my poor kings up against his three and as good as four aces.

"Well, he drew one and I gave him the five of clubs. I took two myself, taking my king and his ace. As I expected, he drew in the card without looking at it, shoved it under his other four, and then said, with a broad smile: "Now, I'll bet all I have," and he threw out the few remaining dollars he had. I covered it, and called him.

" 'I have four aces,' he replied, as he turned up his hand, and then when he saw the cards he uttered an awful oath, and shouted: 'Well, I'll be damned if they didn't change right before my very eyes!'

" 'I know they did,' I said, as I pocketed the coin, 'and your paper isn't worth two cents a pound playing with me;' and I left the place \$500 richer for that transaction.

"Paper men have many ways of marking cards. Some of them carry a small machine which is attached to their finger and resembles a ring, and with this they cut the backs of the cards near the corners, so that when dealing they always have an advantage.

"Hold out men are men who when playing conceal cards in the palm of their hand. They do this

very cleverly, sometimes dealing and handling the pack while palming a half dozen cards, and they can get rid of them without detection. Even if you have your eyes on the man it is hard to see anything crooked. For instance one of these fellows will hold four of a kind in his hand until it comes his age. Not always four aces, in fact, very rarely anything higher than tens, because high cards are more apt to excite suspicion. After the dealer has given out cards and laid down the deck, the hold out man will put his hand down on the deck, thereby putting his four tens on top, and say, 'Wait a while; this should have been my deal.' This is merely an excuse for his action in putting the cards on top. After a little dispute he will draw four cards, and as he is the first to draw he will get the four tens. Of course he can't play that trick more than twice at least in the evening, so he must select some time when there is a big pot, and that isn't always possible. That is why the second card and the paper man have an advantage over the hold out man."

It not only requires skill to perform these tricks, but to use them as a gambler a man must possess an iron nerve and never get rattled. Some magicians are very clever with cards, in fact more so than any gambler, but they can't play poker with a crooked card player. No man could handle cards with the dexterity of Hermann but he was a regu-

lar loser at poker. Of course there is another side to this. Hermann did not try to cheat while playing poker. If he or any other expert would deliberately use his wonderful skill to cheat at cards does any one doubt that he could not defeat any crooked player? I would hate to stake the crook against him.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CLASSIC TALES OF POKER—THE ONE-EYED MAN—ORIGIN
OF THE LOOLOO—FOUR KINGS AS BANK COLLATERAL
—JAY GOULD AS A PHILANTHROPIST.

Around such an old and venerable institution as poker there has necessarily grown up a crop of classic stories, passed down from year to year, changing their location perhaps but preserving their main features, and losing nothing of their attractiveness from age. You may or may not have heard them before; if they are new to you, so much the better; if old friends they will be welcomed heartily. They run the gamut from grave to gay, from lively to severe, although in this collection we will omit the grave and the severe.

In the way of sarcasm where can we find a nicer bit than in the story of the gambler who was indicted for running a game of chance, and triumphantly acquitted on the plea of his counsel that the players who bucked against his bank didn't have any chance? This little bit should be highly appreciated by some of the venturesome visitors to the Chicago World's Fair who explored Clark Street.

A variant myth is equally apt and pithy. A poker player was hauled up before a justice on the charge of gambling.

"So you were playing cards for money?" said the magistrate, severely.

"No, sir; we were playing for chips."

"It's all the same thing. You got your chips cashed for money at the end of the game, I suppose?"

"No, sir."

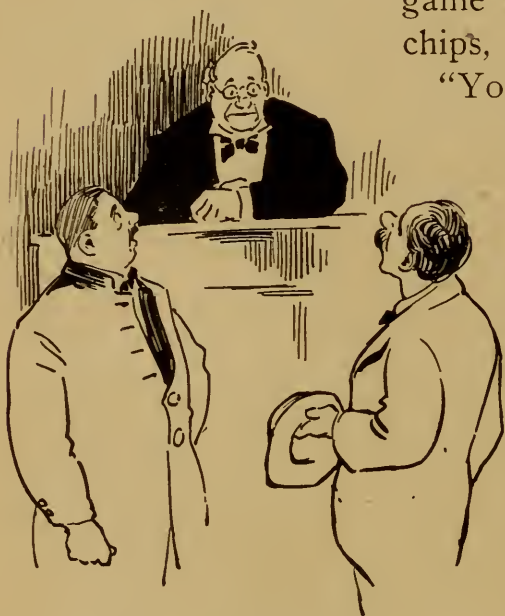
"No! How's that?"

"At the end of the game I didn't have any chips, your honor."

"You're discharged," said the judge, and he snapped it out so quick that the constable turned pale.

In Montana to assume that the judge is ignorant of any of the niceties of poker is to be fined for contempt of court.

A lawyer defending a prisoner charged with swindling explained: "Your honor, one of the witnesses alleges that my client rung in a cold deck on him. A cold deck, your honor, it may be necessary to explain, is a"——



"You're discharged," said the Judge.

"The assumption," said the judge, severely, "that the court doesn't know what a cold deck is, Mr. Sharp, is an impertinence that will subject you to a fine if persisted in. Proceed with your argument."

The prevalence of poker in the West was once demonstrated to the satisfaction of a traveler in that region.

"Can we have a little two dollar limit up stairs?" he asked of the hotel clerk.

"Certainly," answered the clerk, "only be quiet about it."

"Of course; but how about the sheriff?"

"I don't know. Here, Front!" the clerk called to the boy. "Run over to the sheriff's office and ask him if he wants to take a hand in a small game of draw."

No picture of western license can be more striking than the following, which is located in the rattlesnake region of Arizona.

"I don't see the prisoner," said the judge, as he waked up preparatory to sentencing the culprit. "Where is he?"

"I'm blest if I know," said the sheriff, looking under the benches. "Just lent him my paper of fine cut, too."

"Was he a big red headed man with a scar on his cheek?" asked the foreman, who was playing poker with the rest of the jury.

"That's the cuss," said the clerk.

"Why, then," said the foreman, "he asked me to go out and take a drink with him about an hour ago, but I showed him I had three sixes, and he said, 'Well, next time then,' and walked out."

"The thunder you say!" roared his honor. "However, he's sure to be in town next week to see the dog fight, and some of you must remind the sheriff to shoot him at sight. The docket is just jammed full of horse stealing cases and there is no time to waste over homicides."

A common saying, "There's a one-eyed man in the game," meaning about the same as "look out for a cheat," has its origin in a story that bears the stamp of truth.

A little game of draw was in progress in Omaha, and among its participants was a one-eyed man. He was playing in rather remarkable luck, but no one could very well find fault with that. Presently, however, there came a jack pot, and it was the one-eyed man's deal. He opened the pot, and while he was giving himself cards a certain bellicose gentleman named Jones thought he detected the one-eyed man in the act of palming a card. Quick as a flash, Jones whipped out a revolver and placed it on the table beside him.

"Gentlemen," he said, decisively, "we will have a fresh deal; this one doesn't go."

The players were surprised, but as none of them

had bettered his hand save the opener, who made no sign of disapproval, they willingly consented.

"And now that we start on a new deal," pursued Mr. Jones, carelessly toying with the revolver, "let me announce that we are going to have nothing but square deals. I am not making any insinuations or bringing any charges, and I will say only this, that if I catch any son-of-a-gun cheating I will shoot out his other eye."

History affirms that from that time henceforth that game was the squarest on record.

A well known sporting man tells this story and swears to it.

"Half a dozen of us were playing a stiff game. A well known lawyer, known as the Colonel, happened into the room, and though he was somewhat the worse for drink he insisted on taking a hand. A hundred dollars worth of chips were handed out to him and the game recommenced. Only a few hands had been dealt when the Colonel's head sank softly down on his vest and his eyelids closed. He was fast asleep.

"On the next hand—a jack pot—one of the players opened on an ace flush. No one came in and he was about to rake in the pot, when he noticed that the Colonel had not had his say. He reached across the table and gave the sleeping warrior a dig in the ribs.

"'Wake up,' he cried. 'Wake up and play your hand.'

" 'Wha's ma'r?' asked the Colonel, wearily.

" 'Pot is opened for five dollars. Everybody else is out. Is it my pot?'

"The Colonel roused up, picked up his hand in a jumbled careless fashion and sleepily slid ten dollars into the pot.

" 'It's only five dollars to come in,' said the other, with the jubilant light of hope in his eyes. 'Do you raise?'

" 'Oh, five dollars, is it? Well, never mind, let her go at that. Raise.'

"Then the gentleman with the flush raised again. So did the Colonel. Finally every dollar each player had, went to swell the prodigiously big pot. The boys hated to see the Colonel throwing away his money in that maudlin way, but they couldn't interfere.

" 'How many cards?' said the dealer. The fists of the two men hit the table with resounding thumps, as a signal that both had pat hands. It was a show-down then. The drowsy Colonel spread out on the table a queen full. The boys shoved him the pot, and he was too drunk to reach for it. The laugh was on the other player, although he did not have much laugh left in him. He said, however, that it was the first time he had ever wakened a man to make him play his hand and it would be his last."

The story of the origin of the looloo has all the

elements of immortality. Every poker player should know it and every poker player who has heard it will enjoy reading it once more. So here it is:

The locale is a gambling saloon in Butte. A tenderfoot had announced his intention of relieving a few of the miners of what spare change they had left after assuaging their thirst. Without much trouble he found a victim who was willing to try a hand or two at poker.

Luck favored the stranger and he won the majority of the pots. Finally he drew four aces, and after the stakes had been run up to a very comfortable figure, he magnanimously refused to bet further.

"This is downright robbery," he said, pleasantly, "and I don't want to bankrupt you so early. So here goes." He threw down his cards and reached out for the money.

"Hold on," said his antagonist. "I'll take care of the dust if you please."

"But I hold four aces—see?"

"Well, what of it? I have a looloo."

"A—what?"

"A looloo; three clubs and two diamonds."

The stranger was dazed. "A looloo?" he repeated. "Well, what is a looloo anyhow?"

"Three clubs and two diamonds," coolly repeated the miner. "Guess you ain't accustomed to our poker rules out here. See there?"

As he spoke he jerked his thumb over his shoulder toward a pasteboard card which hung on the wall back of the bar. It read:

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.....
:                                     :
:               A LOOLOO             :
:                                     :
:               BEATS FOUR ACES.      :
:                                     :
.....

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The game proceeded but it was plainly evident that the unsophisticated young gamester had something on his mind. Within five minutes he suddenly braced up and his face was wreathed in smiles. Then he began betting with his former vigor and recklessness. In fact he staked his last dollar on his hand.

Just at this juncture the barkeeper stopped in the midst of manipulating a cocktail, and hung up another card behind the bar and above the dazzling array of glasses and bottles.

The young man threw down his hand with an exultant whoop. "It's my time to howl just about now!" he cried, as he reached for the money. "There's a looloo for you—three clubs and two diamonds."

"Pshaw!" exclaimed the miner. "Really, this is too bad. You don't understand our rules at all. You certainly don't mean to tell me that you play

poker in such a slip shod way down East, do you? Why, look at that rule over there."

He pointed over the head of the busy barkeeper. The unfortunate young man read his doom in the handwriting on the wall. The bit of pasteboard bore this legend:

THE LOOLOO
CAN BE
PLAYED
BUT ONCE A NIGHT.

They say it was a Chicago man who was thus introduced to this awful innovation. He raised money to take him home, and got even on his dear friends, but the secret soon got out, and the loo-loo now goes in Chicago right along.

Of course a subject so prolific in possibilities has not escaped the attention of the funny man, and in his efforts of the imagination he has spared neither age nor position in life. Even the clergy have not escaped.

There is the story of the gentleman who had inadvertently slipped a blue chip into the contribution box, and called upon his pastor next day with

an apology for his carelessness, and proffered a silver dollar in place of the chip.

"Ah, yes," said the divine. "Let me see. You belong to the Lake Shore Club, I believe?"

"I do," replied the gentleman, promptly.

"Then," returned the clergyman, decidedly, "a dollar is not enough. A blue chip is worth five dollars in your game."

Perhaps it was the same minister who remarked from the pulpit, while examining the contents of the contribution box:

"I regret to say that the heathen have not yet arrived at that point of civilization where they will derive any benefit from poker chips, but if the gentlemen who contributed these tokens will step around to the vestry after services, they may redeem them; otherwise I will keep them until the heathen can be instructed."

An Oklahoma preacher was even more shrewd.

"The collection will now be taken," he said, "and I take this opportunity to remark that poker chips don't go any more. Get them cashed before you come and bring the money. I am forced to this decision by the fact that some of the brethren have been shoving off chips of their own manufacture and letting the laugh be on us when we went to get them cashed at the Dewdrop Fortune Parlors."

A still more alarming state of affairs is revealed in the protest which the Rev. Lettus Hitemhard felt constrained to make to his congregation.

"My friends," said he, earnestly, "the extent to which gambling has been carried on in our town is alarming. From my study I can look across the street into a clubroom, where night after night young men gather to play cards. Last night I saw a sight that made my blood run cold. There at a table sat four young men playing poker—for money! Yes, for money. I don't wonder that you shudder, brethren. Large stacks of money were before them, and would you believe it, I actually saw one young man, who ought to have known better, bet ten blue chips on a pair of kings!"

The razor and the negro are supposed to be inseparable companions, so in this class of poker tales you naturally expect to run across a razor. As for example, in this dialogue:

"Did you have a citing game last night?"

"On'y played one hand."

"Festivities rather short, hey? What break 'em up?"

"Dar was seben dollahs on de table an' I had three kings."

"Berry good foh a stahter."

"An' Mistah Jenkins held up cards."

"Promisin'."

"Sho'. An' I drew annuda king."

"An' won de pot?"

"No."

"Why, what did Jenkins draw?"

"Er razor."

The following story is told about the late lamented King Kalakaua, who when he ruled the Sandwich Islands was a really good fellow, if his skin was dark. It is also told about the famous



"Excuse me," said that functionary * * * "you are a shade too dark."

Tom Corwin, the Southern statesman of ante bellum days. Corwin had a very dark complexion, and it is told of him that he once attended a ball given in Washington by a very exclusive mulatto set. He was in company with another Southerner also of a

sallow hue, and as they presented their tickets at the door, they were halted by the doorkeeper.

"Excuse me," said that functionary. "Your friend may enter, but, pardon me—you are a shade too dark."

However, Paul Newman, who was Attorney-General for Kalakaua, declares that the King was

the hero of this story. He says that the king was an ardent poker player but not a high roller, as generally believed.

One night Newman, the King and two others were having a friendly set-to when a revolution broke out. Matters were getting interesting—around the poker table—when a messenger came running in to announce that the rioters were on their way to sack the royal palace. It was decided to go home directly after the jack pot, consequently the betting was fast and furious. As the King placed his last bet on the board the report of guns was heard.

“Run for your lives!” cried Kalakaua.

The party started to run, but before they got under way, the King showed his hand and raked in the pot. The party was so nervous that they did not notice the cards closely, so the King, who had three jacks, rung in a photo of himself as the fourth jack. After the riot had been suppressed, the trick was discovered, but as Kalakaua had been a steady loser all summer, it was not considered good form to kick.

When ex-Senator Thomas Fitch lived in Virginia City, Nevada, he was unquestionably the finest orator on the Pacific slope, and the best equipped lawyer, with the possible exception of the supreme judge, Stephen J. Field. Tom was the idol of every mining camp in those parts where he

was widely known. One of his failings, however, was his carelessness in money matters and his intrepidity in incurring debts. He also had a weakness for cards and never missed an opportunity of getting into a game.

One Sunday morning in 1874, Jim Merry, a well known sporting man of Virginia City, rose with the sun and was ambling down K Street for his cocktail, when he met Tom Fitch.

"Good morning, Senator," greeted Merry, "and what brings you out so early?"

"I've been up all night in a game," answered Fitch, with some acerbity.

"Well, how did you come out?" queried Merry.

"Lost \$2,530," replied the senator.

"That's too bad, Senator," said Merry, commiseratingly. "You must have played in bad luck."

"So I did," said Fitch. "And the worst of it is that thirty dollars of it was in cash money."

Of course the following incident happened in the breezy West, and it bears all the earmarks of sacred truth, which always makes a story much more enjoyable.

One morning the janitor of the bank opened the door and was surprised to see three rather tired looking men sitting on the steps, the center one of whom held a sealed envelope carefully in sight of his companions. A few minutes later the cashier of the bank arrived and they followed him into the building.

"Good morning, gentlemen," he said, pleasantly. "Want to make a deposit?"

"No; I want to negotiate a loan," said the man with the envelope, "and there ain't a minute to lose. I want five thousand dollars quicker than Hades can scorch a feather."

"What collateral have you to offer? Governments or commercial paper?" inquired the bank official.

"Governments nothing!" exclaimed the man. "I've got something that beats four per cents all hollow. You see, I've been sitting in a poker game across the street, and there's more than five thousand dollars in the pot. There are three or four pretty strong hands out, and as I've every cent in the center the boys have given me thirty minutes to raise a stake on my hand. It's in this envelope. Just look at it, but don't give it away to these gentlemen. They are in the game, and came along to see that I don't monkey with the cards."

"But, my dear sir," said the cashier, who had quietly opened the envelope and found it to contain four kings and an ace, "this is entirely irregular. We do not lend money on cards."

"But you ain't going to see me raised out on a hand like this, are you?" whispered the poker player, anxiously. "These fellows think I'm bluffing, and I can just clean out the whole gang. You see, we ain't playing straight flushes, so I've got 'em right in the door."

"Can't help it, sir; never heard of such a thing," said the cashier, severely, and the disappointed applicant and his friends filed sadly out.

On the corner they met the president of the bank who was himself just from an all night game. The man explained the case again, and the next moment the superior officer darted into the bank, seized a bundle of twenties and followed the trio. In about ten minutes he returned with the bundle and an extra handful of twenties, which he flung on the counter.

"Here, credit five hundred dollars to interest account," he said to the cashier. "Why, I thought you had more business snap. Ever play poker?"

"No, sir."

"Ah, I thought not. If you had you would know what good collateral was. Remember that in future four kings and an ace, with straight flushes barred, are always good in this institution for our entire assets, sir—our entire assets."

The man who wins a lot of money from another fellow and then gives it back with a sermon, has appeared several times in print, and now he makes his bow in the guise of no less a person than the famous Jay Gould.

It was in Chicago about twenty years ago. He happened to be at a hotel when a social game of poker was in progress. One of the party was a young man of about twenty-eight, who was plung-

ing recklessly. He was winning right along, raking in pot after pot, and punctuating every one with a drink.

Mr. Gould was looking on, but making no comment, and as it happened no one knew who he was. Finally one of the party quit, and the others asked Gould to take a hand. He declined. The game went on, the players getting every minute more reckless and drunker. The young plunger at length said, sneeringly, to Gould, "Say, if you come in, we'll make it ten cent limit."

Gould was stung by the sarcasm.

"Yes, I'll play," he said, quietly, "but you must not alter your game. I have not played for years, but I guess I can learn again."

The game started again, and the plunger opened the pot for a thousand dollars. He chuckled as he did so and fingered his winnings, which amounted to nearly \$8,000. The others dropped out, and Gould raised it a thousand dollars.

"Two thousand better," shouted the reckless better.

"Twenty thousand better," said Gould, taking a roll of bills from his pocket and counting out that amount.

The young man sank back in his chair, sobered by the shock. Forcing a smile on his face, he said:

"I have only five thousand in cash. Can I have a show down?"

"Yes," said Gould, grimly.

There was a show down, and you are prepared to hear that Jay Gould had four aces. He always held four aces in every game he played—railroads or anything else. The broken young man arose and staggered out of the room, with the prospect of utter ruin staring him in the face.

As he was about to leave the hotel a waiter stepped up to him and told him that a gentleman wished to see him in his room.

"Young man," said Gould, when the young man was brought into his presence. "I learn that you occupy a responsible position in this city, and that you have a young wife and a child, both probably waiting for you at this moment. You have ruined yourself, your wife and your little one for an hour's pleasure. It is quite evident that you are not fit to own anything more than a twenty dollar bill, but your wife must not suffer for you. Here," and he handed him the money he had lost, "take this to her, and ask her to take care of it for you."

As the young man went out, humiliated but thankful, he stopped at the desk and found out that his benefactor's name was Jay Gould. Now that is the story and they do say that from that day Jay Gould developed symptoms of that disease which carried him off—enlargement of the heart.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE POETRY OF POKER—DITTIES, WISE AND OTHERWISE,
WISE, ABOUT THE GREAT NATIONAL GAME.

It is a very singular feature about poker that it has no distinctive poetry to commemorate its greatness. There must have been at least ten thousand poems, big and little, written about war, while poker has been sadly neglected, although men have been known to get just as mad and excited over the game—particularly when it was not ruining their way—as any warrior who charged up San Juan Hill. Horse racing has had its poets, and “How Salvator Won,” is a classic. Baseball has been immortalized in “Casey at the Bat,” and the football poet has been heard in the land. Then why has poker been neglected? Where is the man who will send his name thundering down the ages with an epic poem on the great national game? Here is an opportunity for some one to make fame and fortune. Meanwhile we must be content with odd bits strewn here and there, of most of which the authorship is unknown.

The first that comes to my memory is a personal couplet recited on many occasions by William Reece, of St. Paul, Fargo, Bismarck and intermediate stations. It runs in this wise:

I'm Poker Bill, from Poker Hill.
I never quit, and I never will.

The idea conveyed is that Mr. Reece had devoted his life to the game of poker, and so he had. To be sure he did quit at intervals for meals and sleep, with occasional gaps when his exchequer was exhausted (William's name not being as good as his tin), but otherwise he was very faithful to his motto.

This same Mr. Reece was not noted for his good luck, and there were times when he became absolutely melancholy over his poor success. To render the situation more trying he came into frequent contact with gentlemen who had apparently no difficulty in filling flushes and helping pairs, and it was to one of these favorites of fortune that Mr. Reece dedicated the following lines:

He can put up the biggest bluff,
His gall has turned to liver;
And if he for a steamboat drew
He'd surely catch a river!

These two examples show true poetic instinct and make us wish that Mr. Reece had turned his attention to the muse, instead of wasting his time drawing to deuces and bobtail flushes.

It must have been a gentleman similarly unfor-

fortunate who illustrated the varying fortunes of the game with this chunk of wisdom :

When a fellow's ahead of the game
He can either quit or stick ;
But when he's way deep in the hole
He can't do nothing but kick.

In all well regulated games of poker the loser has the privilege of kicking. In Helena, Montana, it used to be the custom when a gentleman had vented his feelings over a specially hard or continuous run of bad luck to bid the barkeeper bring in a barrel or a post so that he might kick to some purpose. This was calculated to make the kicker feel better.

It was quite a time out West before the old veterans tolerated any of the modern innovations in the noble game and it was this spirit that dictated the forcible poetical remark here given :

The man who'd play the "joker"
In a friendly game of poker—
He be dam !

The only poet who has turned his attention to poker and given us a book on it is Mr. George W. Allen, of St. Louis. It is marred, however, by the fact that it is not a poem in the strict sense of the term, being rather a poker code, conveying in-

struction in a rhyme. In fact, Mr. Allen closes his work by giving a lot of plain, prosaic statistics about bettering your hand. Poker players may remember having seen something of that sort; all about how you ought to draw to this or that, and when to stay in or stay out, and a lot more in the same line that poker players pay no attention to when they are actually locked in deadly combat over the round table.

However, Mr. Allen evidently knows something about poker, although he slips a cog once in a while, which is not to be wondered at when we consider the complexity of the theme.

"Let them rave over whist," melodiously chants the poet as a preface to his rhymed essay:

Let them rave over whist,
And admit all they say—
There's a game that is better
For seven to play.

Why seven? Whist is not played by seven persons. Neither is poker, as a rule, unless the players are willing to shuffle up the discard to draw cards, and that is liable to lead to complications. Perhaps there is something more poetic about seven than four or five.

Having thus attuned his lyre, Mr. Allen sings in a sweeter key of the chances of getting the various

hands in the great and alluring game. Here is what he says about the "draw," that fateful rite upon which destiny hangs breathless.

Those who go in with hands the best
Will come out better than the rest
It's what they "draw to" and have "cold"
And not "all in the draw" as told.

Of course it is not "all" in the draw, but Mr. Allen is too rash when he makes the bold statement that the man who goes in with the best hand will come out in the same situation. Then what would be the use of going in with a bobtail flush, which, as it stands, is worth nothing at all? And who has not elevated the pot on two pair and been beautifully flaxed by some one who stayed on a measley pair of fours and caught the other one? Go to, Mr. Allen!

Then he sings right along like a bird and describes the chances of the draw for various hands.

Drawing for flushes ought to pay
When five or six go in and stay;
Or when there's any chance to win
Five times the cost of going in.

That's what you might call playing them close to your stomach. There may be men who can do it, but they are few. It requires a strong constitu-

tion to resist the temptation to draw to a four flush, with ace or king up, even if there is only one other in the game. Still, that's business, no doubt.

Here is a verse on a mooted point, that has in its meter the ring of sage experience.

With four flush and tens or under,
Break the pair—more chance for plunder.
With aces up, and threes to beat,
Draw three, if others don't compete.

Plunder? More chance for plunder? What sort of cold blooded talk is this coming from a poet? One is bound to suspect that the St. Louis rhymester is in the game for keeps, and not merely a joyous delineator. No one would care to buck up against a man who could write such cold and cruel lines. And he is artful, too. Just listen:

When you have threes and the pot is small,
Then you draw one to fool them all;
That you improve, is one to 'leven,
As fours make once in forty-seven.

There is more truth than poetry in that. But he does not believe in this decoy draw except when the pot is so little that one can afford to monkey with it indifferently.

In the following our poet gets right down to hard pan and friendship ceases.

Sometimes with threes you have more fun,
By holding up and drawing one;
But in big pots where all go in,
Draw two—you may need fours to win.

Got it down fine, hasn't he? Yet we have all seen the time when a really terrific hand has been made by holding up a side card, and it requires a man of iron nerve to throw away a fat ace or a lusty king when it accompanies three little deuces or treys. And then you don't get as good a play when you draw two cards to threes, and thus give your hand away, as if you can make the boys think you are drawing to two pair.

But for real, downright duplicity just lend your ear to this song of the serpent as he lays a snare for his victim.

Sometimes it pays when naught you hold,
To play "pat" hands, and bet 'em bold,
Then others call—you win two-fold
When you have straights or flushes "cold."

The man must be a perfect demon. Is it right to play on the innocence of your friends in that way? You will notice that the poet intimates that when he stands pat with nothing in his hand and gets away with the stakes he is going to let the other fellows see that he has bluffed them, so as to lure

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them on to ruin, when he subsequently holds a pat flush or full. It is just as well that young players should be warned against such frightful tricks, so that they will not burn up their good money in playing against poets.

On the very heels of this he comes out with a lyric on a "dead bluff."

Most any pair, and little "sand,"

Will often beat a first rate hand.

Bluffing pays one hand in twenty,

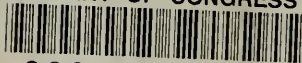
Sometimes more when chips are plenty.

And so on, through all the varying features and vicissitudes of the great national game, the poet rides his Pegasus against and amidst chips, jack pots, kitties and the like. Some of his advice sounds worldly and unfeeling, but it is poetical, and beginners must always bear in mind that the vast majority of poker players do not sit down to the table for the benefit of their health. Indeed, at almost any friendly game, it appears at times as if the players were out for the heart's blood of their friends.

THE END.

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